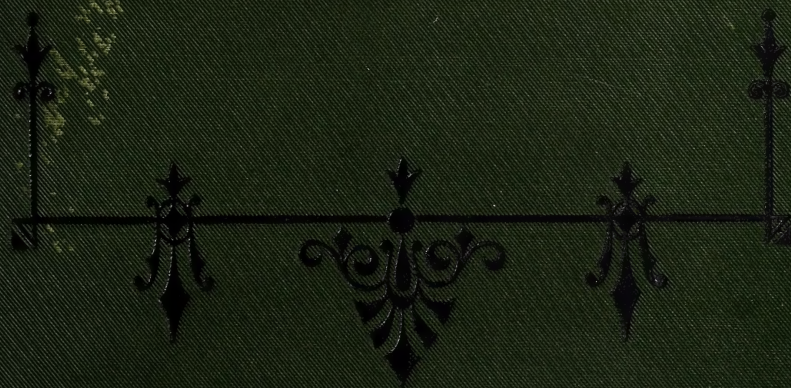




REVIVAL  
BY  
SERMONS  
REV. DANIEL BAKER, D.D.





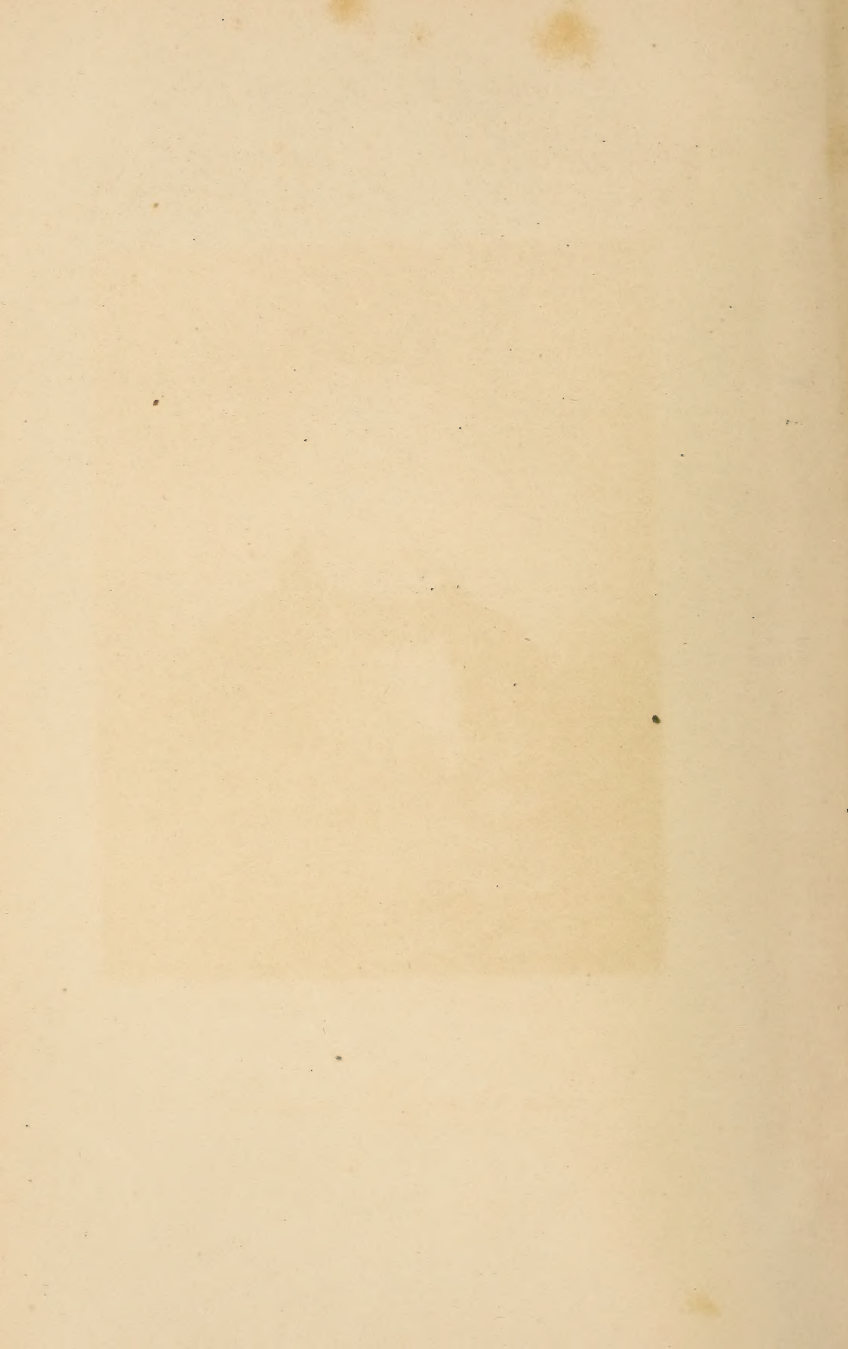


















Eng<sup>d</sup> by A.H. Ritchie

Dan Baker



# REVIVAL SERMONS.

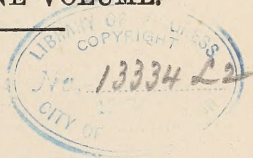
BY THE  
REV. DANIEL BAKER, D.D.

WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION BY REV. WILLIAM M. BAKER.

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COMPLETE IN ONE VOLUME.

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SEVENTH EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:  
PUBLISHED BY ALFRED MARTIEN,  
29 SOUTH SEVENTH STREET.  
1880.

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1880.



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## INTRODUCTORY.

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My feeling toward my father, and ever since I can remember, has been such, that I have at times feared the Apostle would have condemned it as an "inordinate affection," and yet there is this excuse for me, that every member of his household, our servants even, sinned in the same way, if not to the same degree. Certain it is, that the disease of which my mother died, was my father's death, for she never held up her head after that befell and hastened to rejoin him within a very few months. Wherever he was known, and according to his degree of acquaintanceship, he was beloved. Because with all, as with his own family, it was distinctly a Christian affection which he inspired, and therefore an affection the deepest and most durable of all. When I prepared his "Life and Labors," for the press I endeavored to guard myself, and him, from any excess of love ; and, perhaps, the large circulation to which that volume has attained, in the Old World and the New, as well as the absence of any criticism in the matter, is proof that the self-control was sufficient. In my Story of Carter Quarterman my father, under the transparent disguise of "Dr. Quarterman," is portrayed with a freer hand, yet even there I have regarded Truth as more sacred than the one I loved only a little more, at last, than how many thousand!

It was Christian affection he had for others—for their souls—it was that which made it so strong, and this it was which awakened such love in return. But this is mentioned because it is the open secret of these Sermons, as well as of the man. They were selected by him from over five hundred, all of which had been prepared with the greatest care, and yet the



writing and re-writing thereof was as the unwearied grinding of the optician upon his glass, until it shall be so translucent as to be forgotten in the heavenly orbs which it reveals. The singular success of this servant of Christ lay in that, the messenger was not so much forgotten in the message as was the servant in the Master. So far at least, as he reached in this, the intense desire of his heart we have explanations of two things.

First. To the utmost bounds of his influence his Sermons, like the Gospel, met, so far as they indeed presented the Gospel, with universal acceptance. Wherever preached, from the shores of the Rio Grande to those of the St. Lawrence, by young and old, ignorant and learned, men and women, dull and talented—from the New England President of the United States, who was a pew-holder and regular attendant upon his ministry in Washington City, down to the poorest negro who wept beneath his preaching in the South, they were equally and warmly regarded. So essential was the Christianity of the preacher that in the days, far behind us, of denominational wrangling, he had none but friends in all churches. Not that he was not doctrinal. The Sermon in this volume upon the Divine Sovereignty has been issued by the Presbyterian Board of Publication as a standard treatise, yet, as often as he preached it, he was sure to be greeted by some Methodist minister, presiding elder, possibly Bishop, as he came down the pulpit steps with the words, "Ah, Doctor, you have turned Arminian, have you? Let us shake hands over it!" Of the many many thousands brought to Christ under his preaching, and of the many hundreds of these who have entered the ministry, almost as many, possibly, are in other denominations as in his own, and yet no man was more attached to his own church. The writer has been surprised to learn of the circulation of his father's "Life" and "Sermons" in Canada. D. L. Moody, the Evangelist, received such impulse from these Sermons, that he had a selection from them published for circulation in England. In his preface to that Selection, Mr. Moody says: "In reading

two volumes of sermons by the Rev. Daniel Baker, preached thirty years ago, I have thought no addresses could be more suitable for the present times than these. They have been a great help to me; and many who are now preaching the gospel bear similar testimony. Knowing particularly that he was the *young man's preacher*, I believe his printed sermons will give a fresh impulse for work to many, and be the means of pointing the way to multitudes who are inquiring." There is evidence that in Great Britain, his labors are prized to this day only less than in America.

Second. It is repeating the same thing in a different aspect when I allude to the perennial freshness of these Sermons. There is positive explanation of this in the man himself. While laboring as an Evangelist, he preached, taking one case as an instance of many, in twenty-four "protracted meetings" of one week each, holding rarely less than three services a day, many of them in the open air, in which over six hundred souls were hopefully converted, and he was almost, if not quite, as fresh at the end as ever. "You do not know how dissipated I feel," he said to me one Monday, in Petersburg, Va., "I am not to preach a single sermon to-day!" At the end of forty-two years of labor, and when in his sixty-sixth year, he had apparently the vigor, joyous energy and freshness of his earliest prime. If his leaf did not wither, if he brought forth fruit in his old age, if he renewed his youth like the eagle, it was in virtue of that eternal life which is from Christ. Of Him it is said, "From the womb of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth." and, surely, with each of His disciples, the closer the companionship, the greater the likeness in this respect also. So far as these Sermons possess vitality and freshness, it is because of Christ in them. The younger ministers of a certain denomination are allowed, I believe, to use the discourses of others in the earlier days of their labors, and more than one has incidentally told me that he habitually drew from this volume, Sabbath by Sabbath. Nor can I forget the min-

gled feelings with which I heard one of these Sermons preached, years after their author's death, in my own pulpit, and by a minister of high standing. It had been written out in manuscript and was warmly received, but an examination of this volume at home immediately after the service showed that not a sentence had been varied from, and I marvelled and held my tongue. So far as there is virgin gold in this book it is because the mine was near to the miner ; so far as its waters are clear it is by reason of the recent Rock. For anything in the Sermons, anything of freshness and vital force, is of God and not of the man. In Shakespeare, it is styled genius, inspiration. Now, no one ever claimed any characteristic of my father so distinctive as that love which yielded him utterly to the Master, and to the Master as distinguished from the servant ; to Him is all the glory since all the power is His.

The First Series of Sermons contained herein was issued in 1846, and, more than thirty years later, this Sixth Edition is called for. In closing I can only add my supplication to that with which my father sent out the Third Edition. "The author would return thanks to Almighty God for the broad seal of Divine approbation put upon the truth herein exhibited ; and at the same time, would offer his fervent prayer to God that many more may be benefitted, in like manner, long after the author shall be numbered with the dead."

W. M. B.

Boston, November 1st, 1878.



# REVIVAL SERMONS

## FIRST SERIES.

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### SERMON I.

TRUTH AND EXCELLENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.  
DEUT. xxxii. 31.

THESE words form a part of what is usually denominated "the Song of Moses." It is a poem of singular beauty; and, by the best judges, is supposed to contain a specimen of almost every species of excellence in composition. It opens with a sublime invocation of the heavens and the earth; evidently designed to convey a strong idea of the peculiar importance of the subject-matter of the poem. The sacred writer speaks sublimely of Israel's God: "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God," says he. "He is the Rock; his work is perfect, for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is he." The author of the poem then adverts to some instances of God's providential care exercised over the tribes of Israel, particularly in conducting them, as on the wings of an eagle, towards the promised land. "As an eagle," says he, "stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her

wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him." This idea of the tribes of Israel being conducted out of Egypt, towards the promised land, as upon the wings of an eagle, is one of great sublimity, particularly taken in connection with these words: "I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand; for I lift my hand to heaven, and say, I live forever." In comparison with such a God, the idol gods of the heathen were, emphatically, "vanity and a lie." No wonder, then, that Moses here indulges in the feelings of joy and triumph; no wonder that he uses the exulting language of our text: "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." Mark the expression—*Even our enemies themselves being judges*. Moses adverts, it seems, to some well known instances, in which the superiority of Israel's God was acknowledged, even by those who served other gods, which indeed were no gods. This acknowledgment, it will be recollected, was made by the magicians of Egypt, when, utterly unable to resist the miracles wrought by Moses, the servant of the true God, they exclaimed, "this is the finger of God!"—that is, this miracle comes from the true God. This acknowledgment was also made by the horsemen of Pharaoh, when, terror-stricken in the Red Sea, they cried out one to another, saying, "Let us flee from the face of Israel, for their God fighteth for them against the Egyptians." It was, it seems, in reference to these, and similar cases, that Moses used the exulting language of our text:

"Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

And now, my brethren, permit me to apply the passage before us to a class of persons not entirely dissimilar. I mean to those ranged under the banner of infidelity. Rejecting the sacred volume, they have a system of their own, if system it may be called. Now, in reference to them and their system, I feel very free to apply the language of our text: "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." It may be thought by some present, that the speaker is not happy in the selection of his subject this day, as there is, perhaps, not an avowed infidel in this assembly. But, suppose there be not an avowed infidel present, there may be many spiced with infidelity; and amongst them, perhaps, some interesting young men, who, in their reading and travels, have had infidel cavils and objections brought before their minds which they know not how to meet; the result is, they have become sceptical. This they are not exactly willing to confess, lest, perchance, it might reach a mother's ear, and pain a mother's heart!—but the seeds of infidelity are there; and, so long as they exist in the bosom, they operate as serious barriers in the way of the soul's salvation. This being the case, it is proper that, occasionally, at least, the evidences of our holy religion should be laid before every congregation. Those ranged under the banners of infidelity may plume themselves upon their wisdom, and the great superiority of their discoveries; but, thank God! we, who are Christians, occupy better ground than they do, and may well

say, with Moses, in the joy and triumph of our hearts, "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

The supreme excellence and great superiority of the Christian religion will appear, I think, very clearly, in the three following particulars:

- I. In the matter of evidence.
- II. In reference to the moral influence; and
- III. In relation to the happiness of man.

I. In the matter of evidence. Yes, my brethren, whatever witlings and infidels may say to the contrary, it is a stubborn fact, that this blessed volume, called the Bible, comes to us with credentials clear!

"On every line  
Marked with the seal of high divinity;  
On every leaf bedewed with drops  
Of love divine, and, with the eternal heraldry  
And signature of God Almighty stamped  
From first to last."

Yet the infidel rejects the sacred volume! And why? O, because he is a very reasonable man, and cannot, forsooth, without a prostration of everything like reason, embrace a system so preposterous and absurd! Now let sound reasonings and facts be submitted to this enlightened and candid assembly.

I. If there be no divine revelation, as infidels are wont to affirm, herein is a marvellous thing, that there should be none! And why? For many reasons. One is this: There are certain questions propounded by human nature itself, weighty and important questions, and which, in the



very nature of the case, never can be answered without a divine revelation. For example: Where is God, my Maker? The author of my being, who is he? and what is he? It will be recollected that this question was asked by Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, to Simonides, one of the seven wise men of Greece. The philosopher requested one day to think upon the subject; at the expiration of that period he demanded two days, and then four—doubling the time. When asked why he demanded so much time, he replied: "Sire, the longer I think upon this subject, the more I am lost in its difficulty and immensity." In the very nature of the case, it is none but God that can reveal God; and yet the infidel scouts the idea of the Scriptures having been divinely inspired—and he a reasonable man! But another question propounded by human nature is this: How can a man be just with God? How can a man, who is a sinner, obtain the forgiveness of his sins, and be restored to the favor of his Maker? This, my brethren, believe me, has for ages and ages been one of the most confounding and perplexing questions ever presented to the mind of man. Heathen sages, and some of the wise ones of the earth at the present day, talk about penances and pilgrimages, bloody sacrifices, costly offerings, repentance and reformation, and many such like things. But it is all conjecture; and, in a matter of such immense importance, I want something better than conjecture. I am a sinner. I feel it, and, troubled on account of my sins, I ask, with trepidation, How can a man be just with God? How can I, a poor, burdened sinner, obtain the forgive-

ness of my sin, and be restored to the favor of my God? I listen, and there is no response! There can be none, save from the throne of God!—and, without it, I live in darkness; I die in gloom, and, sinking in the cold embrace of death, I have only to say, with the dying Adrian, “Alas! my trembling, dear, departing soul, whither art thou going?” I say, there can be no response, to satisfy the troubled conscience, save from the throne of God. The case is clear. Take this illustration. I have injured you: upon reflection, I am very sorry for it, and I wish to know on what terms I may be restored to your favor. Shall I ask one of your servants? He knows nothing at all about the matter. He can give nothing better than conjecture. You, my dear sir, the person injured—you only can tell me on what terms I may be restored to your favor. Even so, in the very nature of the case, it is none but God himself who can satisfactorily answer the question, How can a man be just with God? And yet the infidel laughs at the idea of a divine revelation, and plumes himself upon being a reasonable man! Not so very reasonable after all! Mark my word—not so very reasonable after all! But

2. If the Bible be not divinely inspired, herein is another marvellous thing to be accounted for—that somehow or other this blessed volume answers all the purposes of a divine revelation. To say nothing of its giving an account, and the only rational account of the creation of the world, of the origin of sin, of the division of time into weeks of seven days, of the deluge, and other matters connected with the early history of the globe, is it

not remarkable that the Bible answers most clearly and satisfactorily the questions propounded, as we have stated, by human nature itself? Take the first question, Where is God, my Maker? or, what is God? You recollect the reply of Simonides to the monarch who propounded to him the question. "Sire, the more I think upon this subject, the more I am lost in its difficulty and immensity." Now, ask the disciple whom Jesus loved the same question: John, what is God? "God is love," says he. How beautiful! how sublime! But if you wish a more extended view of the Divine character, according to the Scriptures, "God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." Can any description of the Supreme Being be nobler and more perfect than this? And, being drawn from the Bible, is not this "a stamp divine"? Are not these "credentials clear"? And yet the infidel rejects the sacred volume—and, doubtless, he is a very reasonable man!—in intellect a son of Anak, head and shoulders taller than all around him! "O shame! where is thy blush?"

But another question, as we have said, which human nature asks with well grounded solicitude, is this: How can a man be just with God? How can a man, who is a sinner, obtain the forgiveness of his sins, and be restored to the favor of his Maker? Sages of ancient times, and wise men of the present day, will talk, as we have said, about the merits of penances and pilgrimages, and lay great stress upon the efficacy of repentance and reformation; but these things have no divine warrant; they are,

at best, only matters of conjecture, and all the evidence of analogy is against them. Here is a man who, by a course of licentious indulgences and extravagance, has lost his health and property; and I find that neither penances, nor pilgrimages, nor repentance, nor reformation, nor all of them united, will remove the effects of his licentiousness and extravagance: how do I know, then, that they can remove the penal consequences of sin? In the very nature of the case, none but God can tell on what terms he will pardon the sinner, and receive him to favor; for none but he can tell what the honor of the Divine government may require, or how the punishment of the offender can be remitted, without endangering the tranquillity of other worlds and creatures which he has made. Now, on the subject of forgiveness and restoration to the favor of God, the Bible is remarkably clear, and full, and express. Thus Paul, addressing the men of Antioch, says: "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man, Christ Jesus, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Again, writing to Timothy, he says: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." And again, writing to the Romans, we find him using this language: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have received the atonement." And again: "There is, therefore, now, no condemnation to them which are in



Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." And all this beautifully harmonizing with the words of the Lord Jesus Christ himself—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." How delightful are these declarations! What light do they give to the inquiring sinner—what sweet relief to the burdened soul!

3. If the Bible be not divinely inspired, here is another marvellous thing—that it furnishes a perfect code of moral precepts. In this, it is perfectly unique, and stands alone in its glory; for I am bold to say, that there is no other volume upon the face of the earth which furnishes such a code of precepts. Those acquainted with the writings of heathen sages and moralists, know full well that their ideas on the subject of moral obligation are remarkably crude; some sanctioning suicide, and some infanticide; and even the enlightened and comparatively virtuous Cicero says, "It is lawful to fight for glory." And what is this but sanctioning ambition? Ambition! the direct tendency of which is to drench the earth in blood, and fill the world with widows and orphans! The Bible, thank God, teaches a purer and better morality than this! We said that it furnishes a perfect code of moral precepts. We do not declaim, we give proof, absolute demonstration. Our Saviour sums up all the precepts of the sacred volume in two great commandments. *First*, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and soul, and mind, and strength; and *Secondly*, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Now, these two

commandments embrace every duty that can be required of man. Take the *first*—We are to love the Lord our God supremely ; see how this embraces every duty which we owe to our Maker. For example, am I required to submit to God ? How easy and how natural it is to submit to one whom we supremely love ! Am I required to repent of my sins ? It is love which breaks the heart, which melts it down in tender relentings for sin ! Am I required to choose God as the portion of my soul ? If I love him supremely, I have done it already. Am I required to obey all his commandments ? And who does not know that

“’Tis love which makes our cheerful feet  
In swift obedience move.”

Take the *second* great commandment—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Only let this precept be acted upon, in all the length and breadth of its requirement, and, verily, there would be no occasion for bolts, nor bars, nor jails, nor penitentiaries, nor anything of the kind. “Love,” says the apostle, “worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” Yes, only let the great law of love be acted upon, in all the length and breadth of its requirements, and man would become an angel, and earth a paradise ! To crown the whole, strange as it may seem, all duties, both toward God and man, are, in the Bible, embraced in a single word ; and that, how simple, how well understood, by the learned and the unlearned, by the civilized, by the barbarian, by male and female, by the child of three years of age, and the man of

threescore and ten—Love! For *love*, says the apostle, is the fulfilling of the law. Is not this a stamp divine? Are not these credentials clear? Yet the infidel rejects the Bible! Let him write a better book if he can! And this reminds me of the case of Lord Lyttleton, who, belonging to a club of infidels, was pitched upon to burn the Bible. Taking the volume in his hand, he approached the hearth, but, upon second thought, returned and replaced the book upon the stand. When asked why he did not throw it into the fire, he made this very sensible remark: “We will not burn this book until we can get a better.” Verily, “Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges.” Again:

4. If the Bible be not divinely inspired, is it not very strange and unaccountable that so many miracles were wrought in illustration of its truths? Miracles wrought in open day, in the presence of enemies, and subjected to the severest scrutiny. Now, either these miracles were wrought, or they were not. If wrought, the case is settled; for they are the clearest credentials of the divine mission of those who wrought them. If not wrought, how comes it to pass that we have such a particular and detailed account of them. How comes it to pass that they were attested by so many eye-witnesses, many of whom suffered martyrdom in attestation of the facts which they affirmed? Moreover, how comes it to pass that these miracles had so powerful an influence in the spreading of doctrines so directly opposed to long-established systems and the passions of men? And let it not be forgotten that, in commemoration of some of these miracles, we

have monuments and memorials brought down even to the present time: the Sabbath, for example, changed from the seventh to the first day of the week, to commemorate the resurrection of Christ from the dead. As the annual celebration of our national independence is a memorial and proof of the fact which it commemorates, even so the present observance of the Christian Sabbath is a standing monument of that stupendous miracle, the resurrection of Christ, which it commemorates. And yet the infidel wants proof! Once more:

5. If the blessed volume before me be not divinely inspired, how shall we account for the fact that it contains some five or six hundred prophecies which have been most literally and remarkably fulfilled; and which, I presume, no one who has a regard for his reputation as a scholar will dare to deny. Here a wide field is presented to our view. We have not time to explore it very extensively; let me present only a few prophecies, as specimens of the rest. Some three thousand years ago, it was predicted that the Jews should be a peculiar people. Have they not been a peculiar people for many ages past? Are they not a peculiar people at the present time? It was predicted that they should be scattered over the face of the earth. And where is the kingdom, under heaven, where some of this peculiar people are not found? It was predicted that they should be oppressed and peeled; and those who are acquainted with their history know that this prediction also has been most remarkably fulfilled. It was predicted that they should dwell alone and not be reckoned among the nations; and are they not, at



this very day, although scattered over the face of the whole earth, yet really a distinct people, isolated and alone? "The children of Israel," says the prophet Hosea, "shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." Hosea iii. 4. And is not this their precise condition at the present moment? And have they not already continued thus to abide, lo! these many days? By estimation there are, at this time, about eight millions of Jews upon the earth; a sufficient number to form a powerful empire or more glorious republic: and yet they have no king, no prince, no polity, no government of their own—and this has been the case for eighteen hundred years! How astonishing are these prophecies, and how exact their fulfilment! And how certainly true are the words of the apostle Peter: "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Of Ishmael it was predicted that he should become a great nation, that he should be a wild man, and that his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and that he should dwell in the presence of all his brethren (Gen. xvi. 12); that is, should never be subdued, or brought into subjection. Those acquainted with the Arabs know that these predictions have been fulfilled to the very letter; and with regard to the independence which they should ever maintain, it is remarkable that, although special efforts have been made by powerful monarchs, in various ages, to put them down, these efforts

have all ultimately proved unsuccessful. Sesostris, Cyrus, Pompey, Trajan, and many other great conquerors, aimed at subjugating them, but never succeeded. At the present day, the Arabs, although wandering and predatory, are still an independent people; like the wild ass, whose home is the wilderness, whose pasture is the mountains, and who searcheth after every green thing. The prophecies in relation to Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, and Egypt, have also received their most exact accomplishment—their present condition, according to the statements of modern travellers, being precisely what was predicted so many thousand years ago. With regard to Egypt, I will mention a fact which may have escaped the notice of some. Egypt, says the prophet Ezekiel (xxix. 15), shall never exalt itself any more over the nations. This was a bold prophecy, when we consider when it was uttered; but the subsequent history of Egypt has been in exact accordance with the prediction. But the particular point to which I refer is this: Some three or four years since, Mehemet Ali, the Pacha of Egypt, was upon the very point of subverting the Turkish empire, and would have done it, had not the sovereigns of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Great Britain interposed; and this they did, mark! not to accomplish the prophecy, but to preserve the balance of power. The prophecies which relate to the *Messiah* are about two hundred in number, which have in every particular been exactly fulfilled in our blessed Redeemer. Let me mention only a very few.\* It was predicted of him that he should be despised and rejected

\* Isaiah liii. 3; xlix. 22. Gen. xlix. 10; xi. 10. Matt. xii. 21.

by his own people, the Jews; that he should lift up a standard to the Gentiles; to him should the gathering of the Gentiles be; and in him shall the Gentiles trust. Now this is prophecy. What is history? In exact accordance with the prophecy. Was Christ to be despised and rejected by his own people, the Jews? He came unto his own, says John, and his own received him not. And they, that is, the Jews, says Luke, were instant with loud voices in the temple, requiring that he might be crucified. Was Christ to lift up a standard to the Gentiles? and was not Saul of Tarsus converted, and made the great apostle of the Gentiles? Moreover, to him was the gathering of the Gentiles to be. And who are they now who profess the Christian faith? Are they not Gentiles? Few Jews, but many Gentiles. On the morning of the Christian Sabbath, the doors of ten thousand sanctuaries are thrown open, and see the multitudes who gather around the standard of the cross! Are they Jews?—are they not Gentiles? But it is added: In him shall the Gentiles trust. We are all Gentiles, I suppose, who are here to-day; and now tell me, my brother, my sister—O ye precious sons and daughters of Zion! tell me, in whom do you trust for salvation? Is it not in the crucified Nazarene? And in whom did that dear mother of yours trust in a dying hour, when she so sweetly smiled, and said to you, “Meet me in heaven”—in whom did she trust? Was it not in Him who by the Jews was despised and rejected? I too am a Gentile, and I am not ashamed to say that this same blessed Saviour is my only hope. Give me Christ, or else I die! This day, then,

have we evidence before our own eyes, and in our own hearts, that the prophecies are true, and the Bible is true. Yet the infidel rejects the sacred volume! And why? O, because he is a reasonable man, and he cannot, without a prostration of everything like reason, embrace a system so preposterous and absurd! Ah! if I mistake not, when afflictions shall make him more sober, and the near prospect of death shall make him more thoughtful, he will then see the evidence of the truth of the Bible more clearly than he does now! Like Ethan Allen, who, being asked by a dying daughter whether she should believe what her pious mother had taught her, or he, replied with tears, "My daughter, you had better believe what your mother has taught you." O how plain it is, and how appropriate is our text: "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges."

II. The supreme excellence or decided superiority of the Christian religion appears also in reference to its moral influence. And here, if I mistake not, we have public sentiment fully on our side: let a thorough-going infidel be truly converted and become a real Christian; will not all persons expect to see an improvement in his moral character? But, on the other hand, let a real Christian (if it were possible) become a thorough-going infidel, and is there a man upon the face of the earth who anticipates an improvement in his moral character? Would there not rather be a suspicion waked up in the bosoms of all, that that man has become loose in his morals, and, therefore, has become loose in his sentiments? Even the infidel himself is frequently constrained



to pay homage to the Christian system, in relation to its moral influence. For example—here is an infidel about to die; he makes his will, and, greatly desiring that his children should not be defrauded, he wishes to fix upon some honest man to act as executor; would he not rather select a man that he believes to be a real and consistent Christian, than an open and avowed infidel? Now these things speak volumes. The fact is, the general sentiment is this, that however imperfect some professors of religion may be, yet Christianity itself is most excellent; that it elevates the standard of morals, and has a direct and powerful tendency to purify the heart and improve the character of all who are really and truly brought under its moral influence; and hence it is expected to make better husbands and better wives, better parents and better children, better masters and better servants; yea, better altogether. This is the general sentiment; and I will now show that this general sentiment is well based. This we would argue from the character of its precepts, and the power of its motives. *First*, from the character of its precepts. It is evident, the more perfect the precepts the more happy their influence upon moral character. We have shown that the precepts of the Bible bear the stamp of absolute perfection; of course, then, so far as good precepts can influence the character of man, the influence of the precepts of the sacred volume must be most happy. But to place this in, perhaps, a stronger point of light, observe, there are three principles of action—fear, interest, and love. Fear, as a principle of action, is certainly very powerful; but it operates only whilst

the rod is extended. Interest is also a very powerful principle, but this principle is not strong enough to meet many cases; for a man may know what is right, yet do what is wrong; he may know that a certain course of conduct will promote his highest interests, but the principle of interest fails to rule him, not being strong enough. But there is one principle yet remaining, *love*; and that we may understand its true nature and power, see that tender mother—she has a beloved Joseph, or some dear little Benjamin, who is very, very sick. See the mother of that child! I can tell you where you can find her, by night and by day;—not in the store, nor in her neighbor's house, nor even in the sanctuary; no! but by the couch of her suffering child! This mother is a lady, born in affluence, and delicately brought up; and yet, only see, how kind and unremitting she is in her attentions to her suffering child! She is a lady, I say, born in affluence, and tenderly brought up, and yet she even takes a positive pleasure in performing the most menial offices for her poor little darling. Now what is it that binds this mother to the couch of her suffering child? What is it that makes her so kind and unremitting in her attentions? Is it fear? There is no rod over her. Is it interest? The idea of interest never once enters her mind. What is it then? Why it is love! Yes, it is love which binds her to the couch of her suffering child. It is love which makes her take a positive pleasure in performing the most menial offices for the poor little sufferer. Take away that mother (it will require a strong arm to do this!)—reach out the arm of a Hercules, and tear away that

mother—substitute a hireling. Bring rewards and punishments to bear upon that hireling to their greatest possible extent, and I will venture to affirm that there is no hireling on earth that will take a mother's place. And why? For this simple reason—the mother is under the influence of the strongest feeling which can animate the human bosom—love. Verily there is no principle of action like it, so strong, so uniform, so lasting! and, moreover, who does not know that the service which love prompts, is of all others the most pleasant and desirable? Now is it not remarkable that, in our religion, this is made the great principle of moral action. Yes, not fear, nor interest, but love. Love, says the apostle, is the fulfilling of the law. And to make the matter yet more remarkable, this principle being fixed upon, to wake it up and give it new power and energy over the human soul, God himself has set us an example of love in giving his Son, his only begotten and well-beloved Son, to die for our redemption. And now, candid man, speak! Does not this look like a religion which comes from God? If any religion can have a happy influence upon moral character, must it not be that religion, all the precepts of which are summed up in *love*? Yet the infidel wants proof!!

With regard to the motives which are, in the Bible, brought to bear upon the moral character of man, they are absolutely the strongest which can exist. This is no rhetorical figure, no idle declamation; it is simple, undeniable fact. Here is the demonstration. Are the motives to virtuous living drawn in the Scriptures from God? They are; and now, is there any god in the universe

greater than the God whom the Bible reveals? Are they drawn from the joys of heaven? They are; and are there any joys greater than the joys of heaven? Are they drawn from the torments of the damned in hell? They are; and are there any torments more tormenting than the torments of the damned in hell? Are they drawn from the love of Christ? They are; and is there any love so strong, so touching, so soul-subduing, as the love of Christ, who, according to the Scriptures, died on the cross for us? Are the motives drawn from eternity? They are; and is there any duration longer than that of eternity? Thus you perceive that the motives to holy living, in the Bible, are not only drawn from three worlds, heaven, earth, and hell, in short, from all quarters, but they are literally and absolutely the strongest which, in the very nature of the case, can be brought to bear upon the moral character of man. The fact is, Christianity goes in advance, lays the hand of a master upon every source of motive, and monopolizes them all. And now, suppose infidelity would urge motives to holy living, (which, however, is not very probable,) whence will it derive its motives? From God? The infidel is not very certain that there is a God. Will infidelity draw its motives from the joys of heaven? These, he suspects, are only the dreams of the visionary enthusiast. Shall motives be drawn from the torments of hell? The infidel is quite sure that there is no such place as that. Shall motives be drawn from love? Alas! infidelity presents, in its system, no dying Saviour, no cross crimsoned with atoning blood! Shall the motives then be drawn from eternity? The infidel strongly



suspects that death is an eternal sleep. O, what a poor thing infidelity is, when seen in the undress of its true character! How lean! how haggard! how shrivelled! aye, and may I not add, how frightful, too! I have mentioned, that if Christianity should universally prevail, if its precepts were acted upon in all the length and breadth of their requirements, there would be no occasion for bolts, nor bars, nor jails, nor penitentiaries, nor anything of the kind, for man would become as an angel, and earth as a paradise. But if, on the other hand, infidelity should prevail, does any man in his senses believe that there would be no occasion for bolts, nor bars, nor jails, nor penitentiaries, nor anything of the kind?—that man would become as an angel, or earth as a paradise? I think not. In the providence of God infidelity did once prevail—*where?* In revolutionary France—*when?* During that period so properly called “the reign of terror.” Yes, infidelity did then prevail, for at that time the National Convention decreed that there was no God. The Sabbath was abolished; churches were turned into temples of reason; death was declared to be an eternal sleep; and the Bible was dragged along the streets of Lyons in a way of derision and contempt. Yes, I repeat it, infidelity then prevailed, and verily its fruits were the fruits of Sodom, and its clusters the clusters of Gomorrah. Infidelity then reigned, and most frightful was its reign. Its crown was terror, its throne the guillotine, its sceptre the battle-axe, its palace-yard a field of blood, and its royal robes dripped, and dripped, and dripped with human gore. All France was, as it were, one vast slaughter-house, and the rulers

of France as demons from the bottomless pit. "O, my soul, come not thou *into* their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." But,

III. The supreme excellence and decided superiority of the Christian religion appears in reference to the happiness of man. What has a favorable influence upon human character, must also have a favorable influence upon human happiness, for these things are linked together like the balloon and its car; the ascent of the one necessarily leads to the elevation of the other. That the Christian religion is favorable to human happiness, is, I believe, the secret conviction, even of many who may not openly confess it; hence it is no uncommon thing to hear even the openly wicked say, "I believe that the real Christian is the happiest man in the world:" and I recollect the remark of a certain sceptic, made to myself, (it was in the hour of affliction,) "O sir, you Christians have the advantage of *'us'*!" I think I may venture then to affirm that general sentiment is on our side; and I think I can show that this general sentiment is well based, for what does the Christian religion do? It subdues the boisterous passions of the soul; converts the lion into a lamb; the vulture into a dove: must not this be favorable to human happiness? What does the Christian religion do? It gives exercise to gracious affections. Instead of encouraging anger, wrath, malice, revenge, and other hateful and soul-tormenting passions, it disposes its subject to be kind, gentle, affectionate, and forgiving; and

must not this be favorable to human happiness? What does the Christian religion do? It sheds abroad a Saviour's love in the heart; gives the sweet assurance that our sins are all forgiven for Jesus' sake; that the eternal God is our Father; that heaven is our home; and that, if the earthly house of this our tabernacle were dissolved, we should have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal and on high. O, it is a blessed thing to be a Christian; even "if it be a delusion," as one remarks, "it is a sweet delusion," and, "if false, no truth so precious as the lie." O, see the young convert, whose evidences are bright and clear; how happy! and see the dying Christian, who leaves the world in the full hope of glory, how triumphant! The Pentecostal converts, we are told, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God. And when many believed in Samaria, we also learn that there was great joy in that city. And the beauty of the thing is this, that when afflictions come, and comforts are most needed, then the consolations of religion are strongest and most abundant; for religion teaches every child of God that afflictions are all ordered in mercy; and are but the sterner voice of God's parental love. Yes! and in the darkest hour,

"Here speaks the Comforter, in God's name, saying,  
Earth has no sorrows that Heaven cannot cure."

This, my brethren, is certainly a great thing for man in this vale of tears; in this land of trials, troubles, disappointments, sickness, sorrow, and death. Ah! how many sad scenes of mourning are presented in this sorrowful

world of ours! Here, some venerated father cries out, with the patriarch of old, My Joseph is no more! and my gray hairs must go down with sorrow to the grave! There, some tender mother weeps over the darling of her bosom, as she commits its clay cold form to its narrow house. Here, some affectionate husband laments the untimely death of the wife of his bosom, the jewel of his heart; and there, some devoted wife mingles bitter tears with the clouds which rest upon the bosom of the dear man she loved—her husband. How distressing! But perhaps this is not all; she is made the widowed mother of poor fatherless children, who look up to her for comfort and support, and look in vain. The prop, the only support of the family, is taken away! and they, what shall they do? The heart, bursting with grief, vents its complaints, it murmurs and repines: “Where is the compassion of my God? where are the tender mercies of my heavenly Father? my affliction is too much for my wounded spirit! it is more than I can bear! would God I had never been born! or would God I were with my beloved, sleeping with him in his silent grave!” Cease, mourner! cease thy complaints! says our religion—It is God, why weepest thou? Remember he is a God of unerring wisdom, and boundless compassion. Know this—enough for thee to know—God does not willingly afflict the children of men, but chastens and rebukes in covenant love. Cease, mourner! cease thy complaints! thy heavenly Father speaks to thee: “Silence, my child! what I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” O how does this soothe the smitten heart,



and wipe away the falling tears! Verily, the consolations of religion are sweet and strong, fulfilling the words of the Psalmist: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble."

"How do you find yourself this morning?" said a certain pastor to a beloved female member of his church, who was near her end. Grasping the hand of her pastor, she replied, "I am in great pain, but O! I am happy! very happy!" How different was it with Hume's mother, who, when in deep affliction, said to her son, "My son, you have taken away my religion, and now tell me something to comfort me:" but no comfort could he give, and none could she receive. "God of Queen Clotilda," cried out the infidel Clovis I. of France, when in trouble on the field of battle, "God of Queen Clotilda! grant me the victory!" Why did he not call upon his own God? Saunderson, who was a great admirer of Sir Isaac Newton's talents, and who made light of his religion in health, was, nevertheless, heard to say in dismal accents on a dying bed, "God of Sir Isaac Newton, have mercy on me!" Why this changing of gods in a dying hour? And it is a remarkable fact, if an infidel have a wife who is a Christian, he is very willing, in case of her death, to have the minister attending her funeral to say, "My friends, here we have a daughter of Zion shrouded and prepared for the burying. You all knew her very well. She was a Christian; she lived the life of the Christian; she died the Christian's death, and is gone to the Christian's rest, the pilgrim's home." But, suppose this wife of his had been as thorough-going an infidel as himself, and the

minister, at her funeral, should say, "My friends, here is one before us, shrouded and prepared for the burying. You all knew her well. She was a thorough-going infidel. She lived the life of an infidel, died his death, and is gone to his place!" Would this please him? Nay, verily, for there are certain seasons when the mind will be sober, and the voice of truth will be heard! You have heard, no doubt, of many an infidel on a dying bed, wishing that he was a good Christian; but did you ever hear of a single Christian on a dying bed wishing that he was a good infidel? No! never! never! never! The case is clear. "Their rock is not our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." Well, my brethren, we must all die. We all wish to die happy—certainly, at least, on the safe side. Now let it be remembered, that whilst the bed of death is most generally a terrible place for the infidel, "the chamber where the Christian meets his fate is privileged beyond the common walks of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven." Here, we will suppose, is a dormitory on the right, where Christians are breathing their last. Here, on the left, is another dormitory, in which infidels are giving up the ghost. Let us visit, first, the dormitory upon the right. Who is that who is just expiring? It is the very pious Halyburton. How serene! how calm! But he is going to speak. Hark! let us catch some of his last words. "It is no easy thing to be a Christian," says he, "but, by the grace of God, I have got the victory! Now, I know, I feel, I believe! I rejoice! I feed on manna! I have angel's food! Mine eyes shall see my Redeemer! O the glory! the

unspeakable glory! My heart is full! my heart is full!

“Sure the last end  
Of the good man is peace! How calm his exit!  
Night dews fall not more gently to the ground;  
Nor weary, worn-out winds expire so soft!”

“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!” Now let us pass over to the dormitory on the left. Who is that just expiring? It is the wretched Altamont (a fictitious name, but descriptive of a real case). O how distorted are his features! and how full of agony does he seem to be! The clock strikes, and he exclaims, “O time! time! it is fit that thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart! How art thou fled forever! A month! a day! I ask not for years, though an age were too little to fit me for the work which I have to do!” Another groan, and he cries out in anguish unutterable: “My principles have poisoned my friend! my extravagance has beggared my boy! my unkindness has murdered my wife! And is there another hell? O thou blasphemed, yet indulgent Lord God! hell itself is a refuge, if it hide me from thy frown!” Here we have, even on earth, the first notes of the wailings of the damned in the world to come! Tell me not of the peaceful death of David Hume. His nurse has told some tales of horror—but let that pass. How did he die, as the most favorable account represents? He died playing at cards, and jesting about Charon and his boat! Does it become the dignity of man, or the solemnity of the hour of dissolution, in any case to leave the world in this way?

Believe me, it was only a desperate effort to bar serious thought—like the schoolboy, passing through the graveyard at night, with satchel in his hand,

“Whistling aloud to bear his courage up,”

Thank God, the Christian has no occasion for any artificial excitement of this kind, for, to him, “to die is gain.” Do you demand further proof? Let us make another visit to the dormitory on the right. How pleasant is everything around this hallowed spot! Who is that just sinking in the arms of death? It is Edward Payson. O how happy he looks! But he is going to speak; what is his language? “I am going to Mount Zion,” says he. “I am going to the city of the living God! the heavenly Jerusalem! to an innumerable company of angels! to the general assembly and church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven! I swim in a river of pleasure! I swim in a flood of glory!” And who is that in the next chamber, who is bidding his friends a final adieu? It is William C. Walton, the associate of my college days; and what are his dying words? They are very beautiful and very sweet. “The sting of death is gone,” says he, “the grave is disrobed of its terrors! Peace, like a river, flows into my soul! I am now in the Jordan of death, and, blessed be God! its waters do not cover me. I shall see Jesus!—see JESUS! what a thought that is! O glorious Saviour!” Surely, my brethren, the curtains of light and glory are hung around this dormitory; but around the dormitory on the left, the curtains of gloom and despair! Over this waves the white banner of the Prince of



Peace! Over that, the black banner of Apollyon! Here are choirs of angels waiting to sing the pilgrim to his rest! There, ministers of vengeance, ready to hurry the guilty soul of the dying sinner reluctantly—O how reluctantly!—before thy throne, thrice holy God!

And now, my dear friends, one and all, remember, we must die; we cannot help it: and remember, after death comes the judgment; and once lost, lost forever! When Death's leaden sceptre is laid upon our cold bosoms, no mistakes can be rectified any more; for, so soon as the breath leaves the body, the decree of an immutable God rolls over the shrouded form: "He that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." In which dormitory would you rather die? Immortal man! take care! great interests are at stake! See to it that you be upon the safe side; for, I repeat it, *once lost, you are lost forever!*

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## SERMON II.

### THE GREATNESS OF GOD.

O Lord, my God, thou art very great.—PSALM civ. 1.

ONE reason why many persons habitually and fearlessly indulge in sin, is, that they know not God. "Thou thoughtest," says he, "that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Psalm l. 21. This being the case, it is immensely important that we seek to know God—that we seek to have some proper conceptions of his true charac-

ter and dignity—of his exceeding greatness and majesty. But here the words of Zophar are brought to our recollection: "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? It is deeper than hell, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth; it is broader than the sea." Job xi. 7, 8, 9. We admit it; we know full well that it is beyond a mortal's mind, beyond an angel's power, "to cast a thought half-way to God." Yet it is right and proper to push our inquiries here, for what though we cannot "rise to the height of this great argument," nor grasp the boundless theme, the effort may at least serve to expand the mind, and give us views of our Maker's grandeur which we never had before.

The man who stands upon the shore of some vast ocean, and casts his eyes over the immeasurable deep before him, sees, it is true, no bounds; yet the contemplation of this sublime and magnificent scene greatly elevates his mind, and gives him conceptions of the immensity of the ocean, both new and grand. Who can grasp the amplitude of creation? who can cast his thoughts over all the works of God? who can measure the great temple of universal nature, and tell its height and its depth, its length and its breadth? Not a human being upon the face of the earth; yet, certainly, he who has studied the subject has more enlarged and correct ideas of it than he who has not. Even so, what though, after all our researches, we cannot "find out the Almighty unto perfection," the effort may, in some measure, elevate

and expand the mind, and enable us, with feelings of more profound veneration and awe, to utter the language of our text: "O Lord, my God, thou art very great." The greatness of God appears in several things:

I. In comparison with the kings of the earth: and to this the Psalmist has special reference in the words connected with our text. The kings of the earth are sometimes termed great; thus we read of Alexander the Great, of Constantine the Great, and Frederick the Great, but, verily, in comparison with the God of heaven, their greatness dwindles into insignificance—dwindles into nothing! Have they thrones? Their thrones are upon the earth; God's throne is in the heavens, "high above all height." Have they robes? God's robes are robes of light and majesty. Have they pavilions? He stretcheth forth the heavens as his pavilion, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in. Have they chariots? He maketh the clouds his chariot—he walketh upon the wings of the wind. Have they kingdoms? The whole universe is God's kingdom, and literally he ruleth over all. And whereas the mightiest potentates of the earth are mortal, and must die, God is in his own nature immortal, and never dies, but lifts his hand to heaven and says, I live forever! Comparing, then, the God of heaven with the monarch of the earth, as the Psalmist has done, we may say with great emphasis, "O Lord, my God, thou art very great." The greatness of God also appears—

II. In certain passages of Scripture which speak sublimely of him. Thus Habakkuk, the prophet, says: "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from Mount

Paran, Selah. His glory covered the heavens, and the earth was full of his praise. Before him went the pestilence, and burning coals went forth at his feet. He stood and measured the earth: he beheld and drove asunder the nations; the everlasting mountains were scattered, the perpetual hills did bow: his ways are everlasting." Hab. iii. 3-6. "In my distress," says the Psalmist, "I called upon the Lord, and he heard my voice out of his temple. Then the earth shook and trembled; the foundations also of the hills moved and were shaken, because he was wroth. He bowed the heavens also, and came down, and darkness was under his feet: and he rode upon a cherub, and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind. He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him were dark waters and thick clouds of the skies. The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hailstones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings and discomfited them. Then the channels of waters were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke, O Lord, at the blast of the breath of thy nostrils." Psalm xviii. 6-15. And what an idea of the exceeding greatness of God does Isaiah give, when, speaking of him, he says: "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand; and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a



very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, and vanity." Isa. xl. 12, 15-17. Once more: What a sublime idea of the greatness of God does the apostle John give in these words: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the heaven and the earth fled away, and there was no place found for them: and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." Rev. xx. 11, 12. Here you will observe we have described the appearing of the great God as final Judge, and as an effect of his appearance, the vanishing away of the heavens and the earth. As the sun, rising in full splendor, with its effulgent beams scatters the shades of night and the mists of the morning, even so, at the coming of the great God as final Judge, the heavens and the earth, substantial as they are, shall be only as the shades of night and the mists of the morning. Smitten by the living and insufferable effulgence of his glory, the heavens and the earth shall pass away as the shades of night and the mists of the morning, and no place be found for them! "O Lord, my God, thou art very great!" But the greatness of God appears—

III. In certain attributes ascribed to him in the sacred volume. For example: (1.) He is uncreated and eternal. What a thought this is—uncreated and eternal! without beginning of days or end of years! There is something absolutely overwhelming in this idea, but it is clearly presented by Moses in the ninetieth Psalm. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed

the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God!" And we may well say, in the language of the pious poet:

"Great God! how infinite art thou!  
What worthless worms are we!  
Let the whole race of creatures bow,  
And pay their praise to thee.

Thy throne eternal ages stood,  
Ere seas or stars were made;  
Thou art the ever living God,  
Were all the nations dead.

Eternity, with all its years,  
Stands present in thy view;  
To thee there's nothing old appears,  
Great God! there's nothing new."

O! who can measure the past eternity of God? As all the nations of the earth, when compared with God, are as a drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance, and even as less than nothing, and vanity, even so all the moments of time from the creation of the world down to the present period, when compared with the life of God, are as a drop of a bucket, as the small dust of the balance, as less than nothing, and vanity! Aye, and this would be equally true, if each of these moments should stand for a million of years. "O Lord, my God, thou art very great!" (2.) God is omniscient. The wisest men on earth, and even the loftiest angels in heaven, know, comparatively, only a few things; but God literally knows all things: all things in heaven, earth, and hell—all things past, present, and to come! and mark, not merely great

things, but small things. Literally, everything; hence the language of the Psalmist, "There is not a word in my tongue, but lo! O Lord, thou knowest it altogether!" No wonder he adds, "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high, I cannot attain unto it."

"O wondrous knowledge, deep and high!

Where can a creature hide?

Within thy circling arms I lie,

Beset on every side."

But this leads me to mention another stupendous attribute nearly allied: (3.) God is omnipresent. This David teaches in the following very beautiful and striking language: "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thine hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Ps. cxxxix. As the sun in its full brightness shines upon an extended plain, and every blade of grass, so to speak, is in the presence of that sun, so is every object, great and small, throughout the whole universe, in the presence, the immediate presence of God. I hold in my hand a crystal globe. It is surrounded by light; it swims in light; and light pervades every part. This is another illustration, imperfect, indeed, of the omnipresence of God. But the best representation of the matter is this: According to the Scriptures, *the eye of God is everywhere*; the ear of God is in every place; and his hand upon everything. *First*, The eye of God is everywhere. All

things, says the apostle, are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. Yes, my brethren, there is not an angel in heaven, there is not a devil in hell, there is not a man on the earth, aye, and there is not a beast roaming in the forest, nor a bird flying in the air, nor a fish sporting in the deep, nor a worm crawling upon the ground, nor an atom floating in the breeze, which may not say with Hagar in the wilderness, "Thou, God, seest me!" Walls, shades, and distance oftentimes hide objects from the view of man; but there are no walls so thick, no shades so dark, nor no distance so great which can hide anything from his view. Literally, all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. "O Lord, my God, thou art very great!" But not only is the eye of God everywhere, but his ear also is in every place. As God sees everything which exists, so likewise does he hear every voice which is uttered, whether, if I may so speak, it be loud or soft, distant or near. Many voices being uttered at the same time will distract our attention. We usually attend to only one voice, at one and the same time, and even that is not heard when swallowed up by a voice which is louder still; for

"Who can hear a shaking leaf,  
When rattling thunders round us roar?"

But God can, at the same moment of time, hear every voice, as we have said, whether it be loud or soft, whether it be distant or near; aye, and every voice distinct, whether it be the howling of the storm, or the sighing of the



breeze; the rattling of the hail, or the falling of the dew; the crushing of the thunderbolt, or the music of the spheres; the shoutings of the world above, or the wailings of the world beneath. Yes, and if all tempests were howling, and all thunders roaring; if all angels were shouting, and all devils were wailing; and if, in addition to this, millions of worlds were dashing together in wild uproar, yet would it be to God as if the pulse of nature stood still, and God were listening to my voice alone. What an astonishing proof is this of the fact that God is everywhere, not only seeing everything that exists, but also hearing! But this is not all. The hand of God is upon everything. If your hand is laid upon me, assuredly I am in your presence; but the hand of God, according to the Scriptures, is upon everything, therefore everything is in the immediate presence of God, hence the language of the Psalmist, already repeated: "If I should take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me." Man is confined to a small spot of this earth which he inhabits, and this earth itself, in comparison with the universe, is but as an atom or a point; but God pervades all immensity! What an overwhelming thought this! God, by his essential presence, pervading the whole universe! Well may we exclaim, with the astonished Psalmist, "O Lord, my God, thou art very great!" (4.) God is omnipotent, but in speaking on this subject we may say, as Job said: "The thunder of his power who can understand?" One thing we know, "He can create, and he destroy;" yea, he can dash whole

worlds to death and make them when he please. Literally he can do all his pleasure, in heaven and on earth, throughout all space, and throughout all time! If all men, if all angels, if all worlds were to conspire against him, it would be only as an atom magnifying itself against a mountain, or a feather attempting to resist a whirlwind! And observe, this omnipotent power is seated in his will; he willed that innumerable angels should exist, and innumerable angels did exist; he willed that unnumbered worlds should be formed, and unnumbered worlds were formed. Yes, by his almighty fiat, by the mysterious energy of his will, the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, yea, all creation, rose from the womb of unessential night, and in beauty, in order, and grandeur, rolled around his eternal throne; and should he now only will it, the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, yea, all creation, would immediately roll back into their original nothing, and give place for a new display of the all-creating and omnipotent energy of his will. O, this mighty, MIGHTY GOD! who, by the omnipotent power of his will can bring into existence men and angels, and worlds and systems, and then blot them out forever; what can we say but utter the language of the text, "O Lord, my God, thou art very great"? But the greatness of God appears,

- IV. In the mighty work of creation. We have spoken of his omnipotence as an attribute; here we have its sublime demonstration. How vast is this creation, and how wonderful in all its parts! How many suns, how many worlds, how many systems! How great their magnitude, and how immense the space in which they move! Light,

we are told, moves at the rate of one hundred and eighty thousand miles in a second of time, and yet it will take five years for a ray of a light to pass from our sun to the nearest star. But such facts immediately confound and overwhelm us. Let us take another view. The globe which we inhabit is really a great globe, being nearly eight thousand miles in diameter, and twenty-five thousand in circumference. What towering mountains does it contain, what broad rivers, what vast oceans, what numerous islands, what extended continents, and what a vast population! If this world of ours is deemed large, what shall we say of yonder sun, which is nearly thirteen hundred thousand times larger still? If a globe of fire, as some suppose, what an immense fiery globe, which, if hollow, could with ease receive into its bosom more than a million of such worlds as ours is!—and if habitable like our earth, as others think, then what mountains, what rivers, what oceans, what islands, what continents, and what a population! And, after all, what is this earth, and yonder sun, and all its planets, to all the other suns, and worlds, and systems, which telescopic glass have spread out before the eye of man? Only as the fringe upon the garment of creation, or as a small village in some vast empire; for astronomers tell us that there are eighty millions of suns discovered, around which roll, by estimation, two billions four hundred millions of worlds; and all these may be only as the outskirts of some still mightier creation; and God made them all! Not only so, he made them without materials, and with infinite ease; he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it

stood fast. Another idea is this: This immense, immense universe is all in motion; each sun, and world, and system, rolling in its appointed orbit with a velocity most astonishing; swifter than the whirlwind passing over the bosom of the deep, or the meteor streaming along the archway of heaven, or the ball thrown from the mouth of the thundering cannon. And God bears up all, as in the hollow of his hand! A giant would stagger under the weight of a small rock, and an army of giants could not roll one mountain, or heave one ocean; but God Almighty with infinite ease bears up all worlds, and with infinite ease can heave and roll swiftly the whole creation. O Lord, my God, thou art very great! But once more, the greatness of God appears,

V. In the work of redemption. This presents a new view of the greatness of God, exhibiting his moral grandeur; and it is this which makes him emphatically and supremely great indeed. Infinitely great in goodness as he is infinitely great in power; infinitely great in all his moral as in all his natural perfections; so that, in the sublimest sense, it may be said of him that "He is a God, all o'er consummate, absolute, full orb'd, in his whole round of rays complete." In the work of redemption, what did God do? He reconciled the claims of conflicting attributes, and in the plan of saving sinful man from a deserved and everlasting hell, he caused each and all of his divine attributes to shine out with peerless and dazzling splendor. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. God could



have made a greater universe than he has made, but we cannot see how it is possible for God, infinite as he is, to have made a greater gift than he has done, so that the poet has well said:

“God, in the person of his Son,  
Hath all his mightiest works outdone.”

“If in creation we see the hand of God, in redemption we see his heart.” If in the work of creation there be a display of God’s natural perfections which has a height and depth we cannot fathom, in the work of redemption we have, in the exhibition of his moral perfections, an ocean without bottom and without shore. Indeed, according to the Scriptures, the work of redemption is presented to us as that which is to the Lord for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty; the master-piece and chief work of the Great God: that, indeed, for which all things else were brought into being; as it is written, God hath created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent (that is, for this specific purpose) that now unto the principalities and powers, in heavenly places, might be known by the church, (Eph. iii. 9, 10, 11,) the manifold wisdom of God. If, then, creation be a casket, redemption is the richest jewel in that casket; and if creation be to the Lord, as we have said, a crown of glory, redemption is the most resplendent gem which glitters in that crown of glory. In the sacred volume we find it written, “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty;” in the same volume we also find this exclamation, “How great is his goodness, and how great is his beauty!” (Zech. ix. 16.)

A Being, then, who is infinitely good, as well as infinitely powerful; who is, in short, infinite in everything that is great and glorious, how great, how exceedingly great must such a Being be! This is the God whom we worship and adore; our God forever and ever. "O Lord, my God, thou art very, very great!"

A few inferences, and I have done.

I. How reasonable it is that we should worship and serve this only living and true God. Hence the beautiful language of the Psalmist: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise unto the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms, for the Lord is a great God, and a great king above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth; the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand." Yes, it is reasonable that we, that *all* should worship and serve the only living and true God, hence the language of the Psalmist again: "O sing unto the Lord a new song. Sing unto the Lord all the earth. Sing unto the Lord; bless his name. Show forth his salvation from day to day; declare his glory among the heathen; his wonders among all people, for the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods, for all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in

his sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the Lord glory and strength. Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name; bring an offering and come into his courts. O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness, fear before him all the earth."

"Before Jehovah's awful throne,  
 Ye nations bow with sacred joy,  
 Know that the Lord is God alone,  
 He can create, and he destroy.

His sovereign power, without our aid,  
 Made us of clay, and formed us men,  
 And when like wandering sheep we strayed,  
 He brought us to his fold again.

We are his people, we his care,  
 Our souls, and all our mortal frame;  
 What lasting honors shall we rear,  
 Almighty Maker, to thy name?

We'll crowd thy gates with thankful songs,  
 High as the heavens our voices raise;  
 And Earth, with her ten thousand tongues,  
 Shall fill thy courts with sounding praise.

Wide as the world is thy command—  
 Vast as eternity thy love—  
 Firm as a rock thy truth must stand,  
 When rolling years shall cease to move."

Alleluia! The Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Amen,  
 Alleluia!

2. How dreadful a thing it must be to have this great God for our enemy!—a God so great and powerful, who is, literally, everywhere present, and who, literally, can do all things! Who can escape his notice, or elude his

grasp, or escape his power? Assuredly, "He that can create, and can destroy,"—"He that can dash whole worlds to death, and make them when he please;" assuredly, he can in a moment hurl the sinner down to hell, and chain him there in darkness and despair! Yea, can destroy both soul and body in hell, and that forever! O my friends, the apostle says, and truly does the apostle say, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Let men hate me, let men torment me, let the stormy cloud rain thunderbolts upon me, and the terrific whirlwind sweep me away, and dash me upon the rugged rocks, but let not the great God of heaven and earth be mine enemy! for in the day of his wrath, who shall be able to stand? And his wrath, once kindled, burns furiously, and burns forever. O sinner! impenitent sinner! fear the God who made you. "Who would not fear thee, O king of nations?" says the prophet, "who would not fear thee? for to thee doth it appertain." Surely it is right and proper that we should fear what is a proper object of fear, and if God be indeed the great God which we have proved him to be, certainly it is right and proper that he should be feared, hence the language of Peter, "Fear God;" and the language of the Psalmist, "Stand in awe, and sin not;" and this language again, "Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob;" and yet many fear not God! God says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;" but they refuse to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. God says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" but this command also they daily



trample upon, as they do many, many others. The fact is, many have no fear of God before their eyes, and positively treat him as if he were a cipher and worthy of no regard. They fear man, but fear not God, who made man. They fear the jarring elements, but fear not God who controls the jarring elements. Yes, the wrath of man, and the violence of conflicting elements, will make them tremble and turn pale, but they fear not that God in whom they live and move and have their being; who can, in a moment of time, raise them to heaven, and number them with the bright and happy spirits around his throne; or sink them down to hell, and link them with spirits accursed and damned forever! Surely there is madness in the sinner's heart. O sinner, fear God, that it may be well with you in the latter end. But do not misunderstand the matter; when we call upon you to fear God, we do not call upon you to exercise a slavish, but a filial fear: and these are widely different. The one may consist with the deadliest enmity; the other only with the liveliest affection. The one is the fear of a slave towards a cruel tyrant; the other is the fear of a child towards an affectionate parent. The one has nothing of true religion in it; the other is the very essence thereof. In short, the fear required is the fear of a Joseph, who, when tempted to sin, said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." And now, my dear impenitent friends, remember, you who have no Saviour, remember you have not yet made your peace with God, and you and God must meet! You have sinned against him, lo, these many years! and be sure your sin will

find you out! O what will you do when God shall require your soul? What will you do when, amid all the terrors of the judgment-day, you shall hear the sound, Depart?

“O wretched state of deep despair,  
To see my God remove,  
And fix my doleful station where  
I must not taste his love.”

O my unconverted friends! you have slumbered over your eternal interests too long; wake up, at last, I beseech you, O wake up to the high claims of God and eternity. And I would now say, in the language of the Saviour, “Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him, lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison; verily, I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing!” O! to be lost, and lost forever! even forever and ever! Think upon that, and may God have mercy upon your souls!

3. How blessed it is to have God upon our side! If God, the great God, be for us, who can be against us? He who is infinite in wisdom and in power, he who has a control over all means and agents, what a powerful friend and protector must he be! Hence the language of the Psalmist: “As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth and even forever!” And again: “The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” Ah, my

brethren, if God be upon our side, we are safe and happy for time and for eternity! and well may it be said, happy is that people who is in such a case, yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord! This happiness belongs to all the truly pious of every place and every age. Yes, it is the privilege of each and all such to say with the sweet singer of old, "This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death." And again: "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my Rock;" and, in the language of our text, "O Lord, my God, thou art very great." There is oftentimes great meaning and great sweetness in the little pronoun *my*. And if it be pleasant sometimes to be able to say, this is *my* house, *my* field, *my* wife, *my* child, how much more delightful, yea, infinitely more delightful, after contemplating the grandeur of the Eternal King, to be able to say, "This God is *our* God, forever and ever!" Yes, great and glorious as he is, this—the Christian may say—this is *my* Heavenly Father, the friend and portion of my soul. Very pleasant, therefore, must have been the feelings of the Psalmist when he uttered the language of our text, "O Lord, my God, thou art very great." This is the language of joy, of triumph, and of complete exultation, reminding us of the well known language of Moses, "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." My brethren, I repeat it, if God be for us, who can be against us? He is a shield and buckler to his people on earth, and afterwards he will receive them to glory. He was a shield to the patriarch Jacob. You recollect this man of God, having been improperly

treated by his father-in-law, Laban, leaves him, and with his family and all that he has, sets out on his journey to see his father Isaac, who was still alive. When Laban heard that Jacob was gone, he gathered a force and pursued after him, resolved, it seems, to bring him back. The very night, however, before he came up with Jacob, the Lord appeared to Laban the Syrian in a dream, and said unto him, Speak not a word to Jacob, good or bad. The next day he overtakes Jacob, and still wrathful, he said, It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt, but the Lord God of your fathers appeared to me yesternight, saying, Speak not a word to Jacob, good or bad. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man to whom thou art a shield and buckler! Jacob, thus protected, continues his journey. On his way to the dwelling-place of Isaac, he must needs pass by Mount Seir, the dwelling-place of Esau. It will be recollected that, some twenty years before, Esau had threatened that he would slay Jacob. Drawing near to Mount Seir, and remembering this, Jacob sends messengers to Esau to conciliate him. Esau deigned no reply, and Jacob's messengers returned to him, saying, We came to thy brother Esau, and also he cometh to meet thee, and four hundred men with him; then Jacob was greatly afraid, and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and the herds, and the camels, into two bands, and said, If Esau come to the one company and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape. Having made this arrangement, he turned aside to pray, and we may judge of the feelings of his heart from the words of his lips: "O God of my



father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him lest he come and smite me, and the mother with the children." And now the moment of meeting arrives; and as Esau lifted up his eyes and beheld Jacob his brother, the Lord touched Esau's heart, and he ran to meet his brother, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept! O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man whom thou dost shield and protect! The Lord can hold the enemy in check by a vision of the night, or by converting a heart of enmity into a heart of love! yea, in many ways. Take one case more: Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, had sworn that Elijah should not live another day. Elijah hears of the threat, and went a day's journey into the wilderness, and sat down under a juniper tree. Methinks I see this venerable man under the juniper tree. He is in great sadness. Methinks I hear him sigh; methinks I see the tears trickling down his furrowed cheeks. But now he prays, and we may judge of the feelings of his heart from the language of his lips. It is enough now, O Lord, said he; take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers. And now, my brethren, see that Elijah who would willingly have died under the juniper tree, without a friend to close his eyes or dig his grave—only see! the heavens are opened! the heavens are opened! and lo! a chariot of fire and horses of fire descend, and that good man, who would fain have died under the juniper tree, without a friend to close his eyes or dig his grave—only see how he is rapt away in tri-

umph to the bosom of his God in glory! Of a truth, "he has found a most secure abode, who has made his refuge God." "The Lord is thy keeper," says the Psalmist; "the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil; he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in, from this time forth and even for evermore." So that we may say to the humblest child of God,

"Go and return secure from death,  
Till God command thee home."

Then comes joy, heavenly joy; bliss, unutterable and everlasting bliss! O, think what a full tide of joy an infinite God can pour into our souls through all the ages of eternity! O, my brethren, believe me, riches are nothing; honors are nothing; worldly pleasures are nothing; thrones and kingdoms nothing, in comparison with the favor of God. Thy favor, O God, is life; thy loving kindness is better than life; for if God, the great God of heaven and earth, be for us, who can be against us? O! then seek his favor, and may you never rest until you find sweet repose in the bosom of a God reconciled through the mediation of his Son. Amen.

## SERMON III.

## CHRIST THE MEDIATOR.

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

—PHIL. II. 6—11.

IN these words, my brethren, we have—

I. *The mediatorial character, work, and glory of Christ;*  
and

II. *The grand design of the whole.*

I. The mediatorial character, work, and glory of Christ. By the mediatorial *character* of Christ, we are to understand, not his essential, but his official character—that which he, as Mediator, sustains in the economy of man's redemption. Had man never existed; or existing, had never fallen; or fallen, had never been redeemed, the Eternal Son of God had never assumed the name of Jesus Christ or Mediator. This is, unquestionably, that new name spoken of in the book of Revelation, iii. 12, and that name which is above every name, made mention of in the passage now before us. Entering upon the glorious work of man's redemption, he assumes a new name, and sustains a new character. This character is commonly

denominated his mediatorial character. The scope of our text would lead us, however, to speak, not so much of those offices which belong to the mediatorial character of Christ, as of that union of the human and divine nature in the person of Christ upon which the mediatorial character is founded, and which, indeed, gives to it all its dignity, and sweetness, and excellence, and perfection. Here it will be necessary for us, by sound scriptural argument, to establish this proposition, that *Jesus Christ, as Mediator, possesses two natures—the divine and human—in mysterious, yet all-harmonious union.* This is a doctrine of prime importance. It lies at the very foundation of the whole Christian system; and with it, the most precious hopes of the believer must live or die. No wonder, then, if we be tenacious for this doctrine; no wonder if we cling to it as the miser clings to his gold; for “if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” In establishing this point, we shall adduce only one argument, with some collateral proofs—I say only one argument, but that humbly conceived to be both clear and unanswerable—it is this: In this volume, the Bible, there are certain things affirmed of Jesus Christ which can properly be affirmed only of the *human* nature; and yet, in the very same volume, certain other things are affirmed of him which can properly be affirmed only of the *divine* nature. Now these two classes of affirmations, in the very nature of the case, cannot be true, except on the principle that Jesus Christ possesses, as we have said, both the human and divine nature, in mysterious, yet all-harmonious union. How do we prove that a living man



possesses both a soul and body in union? Very much in this way. Speaking of this man, for example, I say that he has flesh, bones, blood, and is mortal. These things, we all see, belong not to his soul, but to his body, and prove—what? Certainly, that he has a true body. Yet, speaking of the very same individual, I change my language, and also affirm that he has memory, will, and understanding, and is immortal. Now here is a new set of attributes, which evidently belong not to the body, but to the soul, and prove—what? Assuredly, that this man has also a soul, a reasonable soul. The connecting link between the soul and the body may be unseen; the union may be absolutely inscrutable. It matters not; the facts are clear, and therefore the inference is irresistible: this man has, in himself, mind and matter united; he has both a soul and a body, in mysterious, yet all-harmonious union. Now let us bring this principle of reasoning to bear upon the case in hand. And first, with regard to the human nature of Christ. Here we need not enlarge; the doctrine is not controverted; we need only remind you of those passages of Scripture which tell us plainly that Jesus Christ was born of a woman; was made under the law—and that he wept, hungered, thirsted, died! These things, we all see, appertain not to the divine nature, but to the human, and prove—what? Certainly, that Jesus Christ possessed the human nature; was very man, had a true body, and a reasonable soul; was as truly a man as any in this assembly. This is a precious doctrine; we have never denied it—the apostle never did; his language is this: “Forasmuch as the

children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself took part of the same."

But with regard to the second point, that in connection with the human nature our Saviour also possessed a nature, strictly speaking, *divine*. Notice the affirmations in our text: "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." Here are two affirmations, having reference to the supreme divinity of Christ. Take the first, "Who, being in the form of God." Here, the apostle affirms that, originally, Jesus Christ was in the form of God. Now as God is an infinite Spirit, possessed of incommunicable attributes, and arrayed in peerless, uncreated glory, it is very certain that no mere creature can possess the real form of God; and that it is the real, and not assimilated form of God, is evident from what the apostle says in his Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 3), where he declares Jesus Christ to be the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. "The brightness of His glory." Now as the brightness of the natural sun in the heavens is of the same nature and date with that great luminary itself, and may be distinguished, but not separated, even so, in the unity of the Godhead, the Father and the Son are in essence one and the same, co-equal, co-eternal. They may be distinguished, but not separated. When, therefore, the apostle declares that Jesus Christ was in the form of God, the idea is this, that Jesus Christ possesses in Himself, really and substantially, all the perfections of God the Father's person.

In confirmation of this, notice the following remarkable facts: 1. That the sublimest works of the

Supreme God are ascribed to Christ. Is creation the work of God? No man denies it; and yet John tells us that "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." (John i. 3.) Is preservation the work of God? Who denies that? And yet Paul tells us that Jesus Christ upholdeth all things by the word of his power. (Heb. i. 3.) Is the work of resurrection the work of God? Who but an omnipotent God can wake up the slumbering nations of the dead, whose ashes have been scattered to the four winds of heaven; buried, it may be, beneath the mountain's base and the ocean's wave? Yet the blessed Saviour says, "*I* am the resurrection and the life; I will raise him up at the last day." (John xi. 25.) Is the work of final judgment the work of God? The Bible says expressly, God is Judge himself; and yet the apostle says, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." (2 Cor. v. 10.)

But the doctrine before us falls in with another remarkable fact, that the sublimest names of the Supreme God are given to Jesus Christ, viz: *God*; thus the Everlasting Father, addressing the Son, says, "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever." (Heb. i. 8.) "True God;" thus John says, "Jesus Christ, this is the true God." (1 John v. 20.) "Mighty God." (Isa. ix. 6.) "The Lord of Glory." (1 Cor. ii. 8.) "The Prince of Life." (Acts iii. 15.) "The First and the Last." (Rev. ii. 8.) "The Almighty." (Rev. i. 8.) "Over all, God blessed forever." (Rom. ix. 5.) Now, give these names to Peter, or to Paul, to Michael, to Gabriel, to the loftiest angel in heaven, and there is blasphemy in it; and yet they are given to Christ, and that, too, by

those who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. This can be accounted for only by the fact stated, that Jesus Christ possesses in himself, really and substantially, all the perfections of God the Father's person. And notice how this doctrine falls in with another remarkable fact, that the sublimest honors of the Supreme God are given to Jesus Christ. Witness the language of Thomas: "My Lord, and my God." Witness what is said of Stephen, the first martyr: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Witness the form of baptism: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Now, whatever is to be implied in the name of the Father, is of course also to be implied in the name of the Son. But hark! pæans are sounding in the world above! "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. v. 12.) There is no adoration loftier than this; no worship more, strictly speaking, divine; yet Jesus Christ is the object of it. What makes this matter more remarkable is this: it is written, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Accordingly, we find that no good man, no good angel, ever consented to receive divine honors. No good man. Paul and Barnabas were good men: having wrought a stupendous miracle at Lystra, the people cried out, in the language of Lycaonia, "The gods have come down to us in the likeness of men:" and the priests of Jupiter brought oxen and garlands to the gates of the city, and would have done sacrifice with the people—would have paid



Paul and Barnabas divine honors. Did these good men consent? They rent their clothes, and ran in amongst the people, crying out and saying, "Sirs! why do ye these things? we are men of like passions with you." No good angel ever consented to receive divine honors. You recollect a good angel once appeared to John, in the Isle of Patmos. John, dazzled by the effulgence of his splendor, fell down at his feet to worship him. Did this good angel consent to receive this divine honor? He was in haste to repel it; "I am thy fellow-servant—worship God." See then, how good men and angels all point to Supreme divinity as the only proper object of religious worship and adoration.

Now, is it not remarkable that the blessed Saviour himself appeared to the same John, in the same Isle of Patmos, and John, dazzled by the effulgence of his splendor, fell down at his feet also? Did He then give the holy apostle any charge against worshipping *Him*? Mark the difference! He laid his right hand upon him, saying, "Fear not, I am the First and the Last! I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive forevermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death!" And this reminds me of that sublime doxology uttered by the same exile in Patmos, in his own name and that of the whole church, militant and triumphant: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to Him be glory and dominion, forever and ever." Mark, "to *Him* who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood—to *Him* be glory and dominion,

forever and ever." Let any being be invested with glory and dominion forever and ever, and he is invested with the honors Of Supreme divinity—he ascends the throne of the universe, and he is inaugurated God over all. These things, in relation to Jesus Christ, are very remarkable, and can be explained, as I humbly conceive, only on the ground already stated, that Jesus Christ possesses in Himself, really and substantially, all the perfections of God the Father's person. In confirmation of this position, take this passage of Scripture: "Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." Jesus saith unto him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen *me* hath seen the *Father*: and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (John xiv. 8, 9, 10.) To crown the matter, notice how the apostle expresses the doctrine almost in the very words which we have uttered: "In Him (Jesus Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." (Col. ii. 9.) How strong is this language! Every word emphatic! In him, Jesus Christ, dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. If this does not express the idea of God incarnate—literally God *incarnate*—what idea does it present? And here I would remark—as thought, written or uttered, is thought embodied; so Christ, in human form, is God made manifest in the flesh.

Having introduced the term "Godhead," permit me to make a remark or two touching the mysterious and sublime doctrine of the Trinity. Some stumble at it, and

why? On the supposed ground of its involving an absurdity. Now, we positively affirm, that the doctrine of a triune God, as we receive it, does not involve even the shadow of an absurdity; for, when we say that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory—observe, we do not say that they are three in the same sense in which they are one; nor one in the same sense in which they are three. That would be an absurdity: we simply say, in one sense three, in another sense one. Is there anything incredible in this? By no means. Rain, hail, and snow, are three distinctions of one and the very same element. And although I would not say that rain is hail, nor that hail is snow, yet I will say, what I have a right to say, and what is certainly most true—in substance *one*; in distinction *three*. Just so with regard to the unity of the Godhead. Although I would not say that the Father is the Son, nor the Son the Holy Ghost, yet I will say, what I have a right to say, and what is certainly a great Bible truth—in essence *one*; in distinction *three*. Do I introduce this illustration to explain the mode of the divine subsistence? Certainly not. I cannot explain the mode of my own existence; how then can I explain that of my Maker, who is an infinite Spirit? I introduce the illustration, simply to show that there is no occasion for stumbling here, particularly when we remember that it is written, “Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than hell, what canst

thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth—it is broader than the sea.”\*

But to resume the argument touching the supreme divinity of Christ: take the second affirmation in our text —“Thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Now, as a good writer observes, If Jesus Christ thought it not robbery to be equal with God, it was no robbery; and if no robbery, he was equal; and if equal, he must be God. But some one may say, “If Jesus Christ be, strictly speaking, a divine person, how can he, being divine, being God, be said to be equal with God? Will not this, then, imply that there are two Gods, equal, separate, and independent?” I answer, that in a matter so far removed beyond

\* According to philosophers, and, what is incomparably better, according to the apostle Paul, man himself, who is said to have been made after the similitude of God—yes, man himself consists of three distinctions: body, soul, and spirit. 1 Thess. v. 23. By the body, we understand the material frame; by the soul, the animal life, which we have in common with the brutes that perish; and by the spirit, (usually called the soul,) the immortal principle. Now here, we perceive, even in ourselves, according to this statement, a threefold existence, not only in union, but in unity. Why then should we stumble at the doctrine of the Trinity as revealed in the sacred volume? The truth is, in our catechisms, creeds, and confessions, the doctrine of the Trinity is presented, if I may so speak, in a skeleton form, and therefore presented to great disadvantage, for no *skeleton* has any charms; but in the sacred volume, it is presented in living beauty, each person in the adorable Godhead being there presented as sustaining some peculiar office in the economy of redemption. For example: the Father is represented as planning the glorious scheme of man’s redemption; the Son as executing that scheme, and the Holy Ghost as applying to all believers the benefits of that planned and purchased redemption, and thus exhibiting the Godhead to a ruined world, in glorious, yet distinct manifestations.



all comparison and all similitude, illustrations are rarely proper. I will, however, introduce one, simply to show that the thing is by no means incredible. Water, in a vessel, may subsist under two forms; as a fluid and as a solid; or as water and ice. They may be compared with each other, and one may be said to be equal with the other; but if you do not like our interpretation, here is the passage, and what will you do with it?—"Thought it not robbery to be equal with God." If Jesus Christ possess not a nature, strictly speaking, divine, he must of course be a mere creature—a *finite* being! My brethren, you may compare a grain of sand with the whole earth; a drop of water with the mighty ocean; and even a ray of light with yonder stupendous orb of day; but, verily, you may not compare a creature with the uncreated God; nor that which is finite with that which is infinite. In no sense whatever can there be an equality—with no propriety whatever can there be even a comparison. The case then is clear, JESUS CHRIST IS GOD: that is, possesses in himself, really and substantially, all the perfections of God the Father's person. We have shown that Jesus Christ possesses also a human nature. Our great doctrine then is established, that Jesus Christ, as Mediator, possesses two natures, the divine and human, in mysterious, yet all-harmonious union! Ah! this *mysterious* union! Some stumble at the *mystery* of the incarnation; and is not the

\* I am aware that those who reject our doctrine, give another rendering to this passage, and indeed to every passage which we have quoted, or shall yet quote, numerous as they are. Strange that so many passages should have been wrongly translated!

union of soul and body in man a mystery? and yet who stumbles at this? Having evidence of the fact, we believe the one; why not, having evidence of the fact, believe the other also? But was the apostle Paul aware of the mystery? He was. Did *he* stumble at it? I give you his own words; you can judge as well as I. "Without controversy," says he, "great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." 1 Tim. iii. 6. Observe: he admits it to be a *mystery*—he goes farther; he admits it to be a *great mystery*; moreover, he would have us to understand that there is no use to have any controversy upon this point. The mystery of the incarnation is not denied. "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." Now if the apostle did not stumble at the mystery of the human and divine nature in the person of Christ, neither do I—nay, more, he gloried in it, Rom. ix. 5; and therefore so will I. And, indeed, well may we all; for, as I shall now show you, if it be a mystery, it is a blessed mystery—full of sweetness as well as full of wonder; for, observe—

1. How essential the twofold nature of Christ is to the various parts of his mediatorial work. For example: he must have a human nature to obey the law which man had violated, and thus to magnify the law and make it honorable; but it is equally necessary, in this matter, that he should have a divine nature also, to give merit to his obedience. Suppose that Jesus Christ were a mere man—what could his obedience avail? He would have to say, as we do, I am an unprofitable servant; I have done no more than was my duty: but, according to the

Scriptures, by his obedience shall many be made righteous. So he must have a human nature to obey the law, and the divine nature to stamp value upon that obedience. Again: he must have a human nature to suffer, and the divine nature to give efficacy to those sufferings. Yes, according to the Scriptures, the Mediator must suffer, as it is written, "He must suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and the third day rise again." Matt. xvi. 21. And again: "It behoved Christ to suffer." Luke xxiv. 46. And again: "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" Luke xxiv. 26. Nay more, it is written, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." Heb. ix. 22. In order to make an atonement, then, Christ must become a substitutionary sacrifice—must suffer; but the divine nature cannot suffer, cannot be wounded for our transgressions, nor bruised for our iniquities; hence, Christ must have a human nature, to suffer; but here again it is equally necessary that he should have a divine nature, as we have stated, to give efficacy to his sufferings; for, suppose Jesus Christ were no more than a mere man, what could his sufferings avail? The martyrs suffered much—their blood flowed in torrents! but we never hear that the blood of the martyrs availed to the washing away of a single sin of their own; but with regard to this mysterious sufferer, it is said, "His blood cleanseth from all sin." 1 John i. 7. And again: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" John i. 29. Thus you perceive it is necessary that Jesus Christ, as Mediator, should possess a human nature to suffer, and also a divine nature

to give efficacy to those sufferings. But some man may say, "Sir, you have thrown some light upon this point, but the point is not clear yet. You say that the human nature cannot merit, nor the divine nature suffer; then, after all, how can the sufferings of the human nature of Christ have so much efficacy?" I reply, there is no difficulty here at all. Here is a clod of earth. In that form you may strike it about at pleasure—no harm done; but let this clod of earth be formed into the body of a man; let it be united to the soul of a man, a prince, a king, a conqueror; and, verily, you may not now strike it about at your pleasure! Who does not see that an injury done to that clod of earth, in its new form, as united to the soul of a man, a prince, a king, a conqueror, is, to all intents and purposes, the same as an injury done to the soul of that man, that prince, that king, that conqueror? The case, then, is simply this: Although the human nature of Christ could not merit, nor his divine nature suffer, yet by virtue of the union of the human and divine nature in the person of Christ, the sufferings of the human are as if they were the sufferings of the divine nature. "It is the altar which sanctifies the gift." The Saviour himself furnishes the illustration. The divine nature is the altar, the human nature of Christ is the victim offered upon that altar, and the altar sanctifies the gift—the very illustration of Christ himself!

But again: Christ, as Mediator, must have a human nature to have a brother's heart; a divine nature, to have an almighty arm. You recollect that when God descended, in terrible majesty, upon Sinai's awful mount, the peo-



ple, greatly alarmed, removed and stood afar off, and said unto Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear, but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Nay, even Moses himself exclaimed, "I do exceedingly fear and quake!" How natural, then, to wish, with the man of Uz, that there were some days-man to lay his hand upon both parties. In our blessed Redeemer this desire is fully met; for, as we have said, he has a human nature to have a brother's heart, a divine nature to have an almighty arm. Both natures are equally necessary, for suppose that Christ had a human nature only, then certainly he could have a brother's heart, could sympathize with us, being touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, and this would be soothing; but if this were all, amid all his tender sympathies we might sink down in hopeless sorrow! But O! delightful truth! our Mediator is, in all respects, fitted for his appointment. As a man he has all the innocent sensibilities of our nature:

"He knows what sore temptations mean,  
For He has felt the same."

"We have not an High Priest," says the apostle, "who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." Yes, it is even so:

"He, in the days of feeble flesh,  
Poured out his cries and tears;  
And in his measure felt afresh  
What every member bears."

This is a precious doctrine. The human nature of Christ

brings him very near to our hearts, and the idea that, exalted as he is, he can be touched with a fellow-feeling of our infirmities, is, I repeat it, very soothing; but if this were all, what would it avail to the saving of our souls? No! He must have something more than sympathy, he must have power. He must have something more than a brother's heart; he must have an almighty arm! and, according to our doctrine, so it is: hence, in the Scriptures, he is presented to us as one able to save unto the uttermost. Heb. vii. 25. O glorious Mediator! O precious Redeemer! One who has all the glories of a God, attempered with the milder beauties of a perfect man! One so distant, and yet so near! Only think, my brethren, (sweet thought!) our blessed Saviour has a human nature, to have a brother's heart!—a divine nature, to have an almighty arm!

“Till God in human flesh I see,  
My thoughts no comfort find;  
The Holy, Just, and Sacred Three  
Are terrors to my mind;  
But if Immanuel's face appear  
My hope, my joy begins  
His name forbids my slavish fear,  
His grace removes my sins.  
While Jews on their own law rely,  
And Greeks of wisdom boast,  
I love th' incarnate mystery,  
And there I fix my trust.”

If the twofold nature of Christ be a mystery (and I deny it not), it is a blessed mystery, full of sweetness as well as full of wonder; for, observe—

2. How beautifully it falls in with the account given of our blessed Saviour, whilst he tabernacled here on earth. In this account, circumstances of humility and circumstances of grandeur are made strangely and sweetly to blend together in the person of Christ; pointing out, at the same time, both his *human* and *divine* nature. See the blessed Saviour, born in Bethlehem; born of a woman, and laid in a manger! Here are circumstances of humility, pointing out his *human* nature; but mark the circumstances of grandeur proclaiming his *divine* nature. A star announces his birth, and angels sing his natal song! See him at the grave of Lazarus! He weeps *like a man*; and then, with authority, says, "Lazarus, come forth!" *like a God*. Approaching the barren fig-tree, he hungers *like a man*; and then, with a word, withers the fig-tree away, *like a God*. During a raging storm on the sea of Tiberias, he lay in the hinder part of the ship, with his head upon a pillow; he slept *like a man*; being called upon, he arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, *like a God*. Having wrought a stupendous miracle, he goes into a mountain apart to pray, *like a man*; and at the fourth watch of the night, he comes to his disciples, walking upon the water, *like a God*. As a man, he pays tribute money; as a God, he causes a fish of the deep to bring to him the tribute money. Disciples of Christ! O see your Saviour on yonder bloody tree! nailed to the cross, he suffers, *like a man*; and yet, in the midst of his sufferings, he opens the gates of Paradise to the dying thief, *like a God*. And see, too, in yonder sepulchre—alas! in yonder sepulchre, the hope of Israel, wrapped in the

winding-sheet, lies, pale and cold in death, *like a man*; but lo! in the morning of the third day, by his own immortal energies, he burst the bands of death, and arose triumphant, *like a God*! And see him, too, after his resurrection: he meets with his disciples, takes a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb, and did eat with them, *like a man*; and then he leads them out to Bethany and blesses them, and as he blesses them, he ascends in a cloud in radiant majesty, far above all heavens, *a God confessed*! God is gone up with a shout! The Lord with the sound of a trumpet! Sing praises unto God; sing praises! Sing praises unto our King; sing praises!

“All hail the power of Jesus’ name!  
Let angels prostrate fall;  
Bring forth the royal diadem,  
And crown him Lord of all!”

3. If the union of the human and divine nature in the person of Christ be a mystery, it is a blessed mystery, for it serves very clearly and beautifully to harmonize many passages of Scripture which on no other principle, I verily believe, can be made to harmonize. For example: In one place Jesus Christ is called a man; in another place, God. Heb. i. 8. In one place, David’s Son, Matt. xxii. 42. In another place, David’s Lord. Matt. xxii. 45. In one place he says, “My Father is greater than I;” John x. 29; in another place, “I and my Father are one.” John x. 30. In one place he is said to be a Lamb slain; in another place, the Prince of Life, who only hath immortality.\* Now deny our doctrine, and I defy any man on

\* Compare Acts iii. 15; Rev. xix. 16; 1 Tim. vi. 15, 16.



earth, or angel in heaven, to reconcile these passages. Admit the doctrine, and all is beautiful and harmonious. With regard to his *human* nature, Jesus Christ is a *man*; with regard to his *divine* nature, *God*; with regard to his *human* nature he is David's Son; with regard to his *divine* nature, David's Lord. Referring to his human nature, or official character, he can say, "My Father is greater than I;" referring to his divine nature, or essential character, he can say, "I and my Father are one." As to his *human* nature, he is a *Lamb slain*; as to his *divine* nature, the *Prince of Life*, who only hath immortality. And now, to put the beauteous crown upon the whole, and to convince you that this is indeed the true scriptural doctrine, hear the words of the Saviour himself: "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Now this is a very remarkable passage of Scripture, and should settle the doctrine of the twofold nature of Christ forever; for observe, if Jesus Christ possessed the divine nature, and that only, he could most assuredly be David's root, the source of David's being; but in this case, how could he be David's offspring? On the other hand, if Jesus Christ possessed the human nature, and that only, he could then certainly be David's offspring; but here again, how, in this case, could he be David's root? the source of David's being? But possessing both the human and divine nature, he can say, as he does say, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star;" evidently referring to his mediatorial character. "Rising," as one remarks, "in his incarnation, as the bright and morning star, he introduced the

gospel day; rising as the bright and morning star in the influences of his spirit, he introduces the day of grace and comfort in the sinner's soul; and rising, at last, in his bright appearing, to judge the world, he will to his saints usher in the coronation-day—the day of a blest eternity. Bright and morning Star! Star of hope to the dying sinner! Star of hope to a sinking world! O shine upon this heart of mine!"

Having considered the mediatorial character of Christ, let us next consider his mediatorial work. And by this we are to understand all that our blessed Saviour did and suffered to achieve the redemption of man, commonly termed his active and passive obedience. It would very far transcend the limits of this discourse, to lay before you in detail all the varied parts of the mediatorial work of Christ; nor is it necessary on the present occasion, for by a very common figure of speech, a part is here put for the whole; the apostle summing up the whole in the humiliation of Christ, and this, with singular propriety, in the connection of our text, inasmuch as his deep humiliation on earth is here presented in striking contrast with the august dignity which he originally had, when, being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. In this astonishing humiliation there are several steps.

1. "He was made in the likeness of men." That is, He who originally "was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person," was, in his incarnation, so veiled, so clouded, that he no longer appeared in the form of God, but in the likeness of men.

"Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood," says the apostle, "he also himself took part of the same." What a stoop of condescension! The Prince of Life, and Lord of Glory, in the likeness of men!

"Harp! lift thy voice on high!  
Shout angels! shout aloud ye sons of men,  
And burn my heart with th' eternal flame!"

2. "He took upon him the form of a servant." Observe! This glorious One not only took upon him human nature, but human nature in a low condition: "He took upon him," says our text, "the form of a servant;" not the form of a prince, or a king, but the form of a servant. How wonderful is this! Nor was he ashamed to take this step of humiliation for the good of man; he rather gloried in it: and how touching are his allusions to this very thing! "The Son of Man," says he, "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" that is, to act the part of a servant. And again said he to his disciples, "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth." Blessed Jesus! But most emphatically did our great Redeemer assume the form of a servant, when, rising from the paschal supper, he laid aside his garment, and took a towel and girded himself, and having poured water into a basin, he began to wash his disciples' feet with water, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. And this is the Saviour that made my mother sing in death!—the same Jesus, who, as thousands have testified, "can make a dying bed

feel soft as downy pillows are." Sinner! this is the Saviour whom you neglect! Is this thy kindness to thy friend?

3. "He made himself of no reputation." Even some servants have a high character, and are greatly esteemed, but the Lord of glory, in his mysterious incarnation, voluntarily places himself in those circumstances in which he received not the honors due to his name. "He came unto his own," says the apostle, "and his own received him not." Although he was the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys, yet he was esteemed as a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness; nay, more, as predicted of him, he was despised and rejected of men! a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. O! tell me, did not our blessed Saviour appear as one without reputation when the Samaritans refused to receive him into their villages? when the Gadarenes besought him to depart out of their coast? and when the men of his own city, Nazareth, led him to the brow of the hill upon which their city was built, to cast him down headlong, as one unfit to live? O! tell me, did not the Saviour of lost men appear as one without reputation, when he was openly rejected by the chief priests and Pharisees, and reproachfully called a gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners? when he was betrayed by one disciple, denied by another, and forsaken by all? when the multitude came out against him, as against a thief, with swords and staves, to take him? See him arrested as a prisoner; bound as a culprit; hurried to the hall of Caiaphas; taken to Pilate's judgment bar;



sent to Herod; mocked by the soldiers; crowned with thorns; arrayed in a gorgeous robe, and then sent back to Pilate again. O, see him at Pilate's bar! False witnesses rise up against him!—none dare appear in his behalf! The hall, the court, the very heavens ring with the cry, "Crucify him! crucify him!" A prisoner must needs be released at the feast, and Barabbas is preferred! O, my soul! think upon this!—Barabbas, a robber, was preferred to the blessed Jesus!—Barabbas, a murderer, to the spotless Son of God! And now he is condemned! not by the voice of law, but by the clamor of popular fury. Pilate, it is true, calls for water, and washing his hands in the presence of the people, says, "I am innocent of the blood of this just man," yet gives him over into the hands of his enemies! And now what a scene of still deeper humiliation is presented! The blessed Saviour is blindfolded! he is smitten upon the cheek! he is spitted upon! he is buffeted! he is scourged!—Only think, scourged! And this is the One who, according to the Scriptures, shall hereafter be seen coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory! O the strength of a Saviour's love! how astonishing does it appear when measured by the humiliation to which he submitted for our sakes! He made himself of no reputation! But there is yet another step of still deeper humiliation stated in our text.

4. "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!" That the Prince of Life and Lord of Glory should die any death, however easy and honorable, is past all comprehension! But

such a death!—the death of the cross!—a death so shameful—so ignominious and so accursed!—so bitter, so cruel, and so bloody, too! How were the rugged nails driven into his sacred hands and feet! How did his precious blood gush forth, stream down, and smoke upon the ground! O sinner! sinner! you know not the strength of a Saviour's love—you know not the tenderness of the dear Redeemer's heart! He died for you! died on the cross for you! and yet you slight him every day—turn your back upon him, and even trample under foot his precious blood! Hard-hearted, iron-hearted sinner! how could you serve your loving, dying Saviour so? “Hearts of stone! relent! relent!”—“Father forgive them, they know not what they do!” Having considered the mediatorial character and work of Christ, we are next to contemplate his mediatorial glory.

By the mediatorial glory of Christ, we are to understand all that our blessed Redeemer receives, in his twofold nature, as the reward of his mediatorial work. To this there is a reference in the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah; and upon this the apostle delights to expatiate. His language here is beautiful and sublime: “Wherefore, God also” (that is, the Father,) “hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Here the mediatorial glory of Christ is made to consist in two things, honor and dominion.

I. In Honor.—In his having a name which is above

every name—the name of JESUS; the sweetest, the most charming name that men or angels ever heard! Verily, “’Tis music in the sinner’s ears, ’tis life, and joy, and peace!” O! the sweetness of the name of Jesus, as it comes over the young convert with the power of a charm, bringing hope and comfort to his burdened soul! O! the sweetness of the name of Jesus as it falls, like the music of heaven, upon the ear of the dying saint, enabling him to smile in death; and, in the full hope of glory, shout, “O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?”—and, O! who can tell the unutterable sweetness of the name of Jesus, as it rolls in choral symphonies from yonder heavenly throng, “loud as from numbers without number, and sweet as from blest voices uttering joy.” The name of Jesus! It wakes up all the harps of heaven! it rolls a tide of rapture all over the world of glory! All eyes are turned upon him! whilst voices innumerable shout, “Worthy! worthy, is the Lamb!” Yes, my brethren,

“They praise him now, their hearts and voices praise  
And swell the rapture of the glorious song!  
Amen! so let it be; shout, angels, shout!  
And loudest, ye redeemed! Glory be to God,  
And to the Lamb, who bought us with his blood;  
And washed, and sanctified, and saved our souls;  
And gave us robes of linen clean, and crowns of gold;  
And make us kings and priests to God!”

In exact accordance with this is the language of the holy apostle, in that noble doxology, or song of praise, addressed to the great Redeemer in his own name, and

that of the whole church, militant and triumphant: "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion, forever, Amen!" Yes, and every pious heart can well respond, Amen.

"O could I speak the matchless worth,  
 O could I sound the glories forth,  
 Which in my Saviour shine;  
 I'd soar, and touch the heavenly strings  
 And vie with Gabriel while he sings  
 In notes almost divine!

I'd sing the precious blood he spilt,  
 My ransom from the dreadful guilt,  
 Of sin and wrath divine;  
 I'd sing his glorious righteousness,  
 In which all-perfect, heavenly dress,  
 My soul shall ever shine!"

But the mediatorial glory of Christ consists also,

2. In Dominion.—Yes, having finished the great work of atonement, and having ascended up on high, our great Redeemer is now, according to the Scriptures, exalted "far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Eph. i. 21. "He is Lord of all." Acts x. 36. He it is, who, walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, holds the ministers as stars in his right hand: he it is, who, seated in the highest heavens, rules the church, and rules the world: and he it is, who, hereafter, "in that great day, for which all other days were made," shall sit as Judge of quick



and dead. "Behold, he cometh with clouds," says the apostle, "and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him; and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen." Yes, "hereafter"—(and mark, this is his own language)—"hereafter, shall ye see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory." Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64. Although he shall come as the Son of Man, "clothed in a body like our own," yet, verily, none shall be able to think lightly of him then; for he shall come with great power and glory—shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire. Lightnings shall flash from his piercing eyes! Thunders shall roll around his awful throne! He shall tread out the sun as a spark! shall break down the pillars of the earth; his voice shall rouse the slumbering dead, and from his lips shall go forth that sentence which shall fix the final doom of all mankind: and verily, all who on earth despised him, shall then wail with a grievous and sore lamentation. In view of this, I would now say to every impenitent sinner present, in the language of the Psalmist, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry; and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little; blessed are all they who put their trust in him." But it is time to consider,

II. The grand design of the whole, beautifully and comprehensively expressed by the apostle in these words—"to the glory of God the Father." On this part of our subject we shall be brief. The heavens, in all their varied beauties, in all their wide and boundless magnificence, proclaim the glory of God—proclaim his wisdom, his

grandeur, and his power; but believe me, brethren, we have something here which "outshines the wonders of the skies;" something which gives a development of the divine character to be found nowhere else whatever. Yes, the great scheme of man's redemption is now, and ever will be, to the Lord emphatically for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty. For example,

It will be to the Lord a bright and imperishable monument of his *love*. "God so loved the world," says the Saviour, "that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Yonder sun in the heavens is exceedingly bright; but God could have made it brighter still! The universe is astonishingly great, but God could have made it greater still! But is there, can there be, any greater gift which the infinite God himself can bestow, than the gift of his Son? Hence the peculiar language of the Saviour—"God *so* loved the world;" and hence also the language of the apostle John—"Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. And well may we say with one enraptured:

"Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
Were the whole earth of parchment made;  
Were every single stick a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade, —  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Though stretched from sky to sky."

It will be to the Lord a bright and imperishable monu-

ment of his power, for it will appear that it was in this way he destroyed the works of the devil, subdued the enemies of his government, conquered rebellious wills, softened hearts of rock, and thus redeemed and disenthralled a guilty and a ruined world!

It will be to the Lord a bright and imperishable monument of his justice. The lightnings which blasted rebel angels in heaven, and awful thunders ever rolling in the prison-house of the damned in hell, speak loudly this language in the ears of all the creatures which God has made—"Stand in awe, and sin not." But O! the tears, the groans, the streaming blood and dying agonies of the great Redeemer, Jehovah's Equal, God's Eternal Son, will sound the notes of warning louder still. If God spared not his own Son, when he was found in the law's place and stead of the sinner, will he spare any sinner who has to answer for himself? Justice of heaven! how inflexible dost thou appear when thy glittering sword is seen bathed in Immanuel's blood! in the blood of an incarnate God! Once more:

The plan of redemption will be to the Lord a bright and imperishable monument of his wisdom, for here mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other. Yes, here "Justice and Mercy are both made illustrious, both made triumphant; one in punishing, and the other in pardoning. An infinite sacrifice satisfies divine justice, and the fruit of that sacrifice satisfies divine mercy." The fact is, in the glorious plan of man's redemption, all the divine perfections are made sweetly to harmonize; this is the grand focus, so to speak,

in which their rays do meet and glow intensely. When man sinned, methinks holy angels struck their golden harps in plaintive strains, and cried, "Alas! he is gone! with fallen angels man is gone forever!" How can it be otherwise? Will a righteous God cease to be just? Will a holy God look with indulgence upon sin? Will the Ruler of all worlds permit his laws to be broken with impunity, and the honors of his government to lie trampled upon in the dust? Perish such a thought as this! It cannot be! Methinks it is repeated from world to world, it cannot be, and echoed back in dismal strains—Then man is lost! forever lost!

But hark! a sweet voice is heard! It comes from Him who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person. It comes from Him who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. "Lo! I come! In the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God! a body wilt thou prepare me! I will take the sinner's place—upon me be the penalty of the law! I will bear the sins of mine elect in my own body upon the tree! I will stoop beneath the grave, to save a sinking world!" What new mystery is this? Angels, stooping from their seats in bliss, desire to look into this great mystery of godliness: then, rising in admiration, they sweep the strings of their golden harps, and swelling their loftiest notes, they cry, as with the voice of mighty thunderings, "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" My brethren,



you have heard of the seven wonders of the world. Here we have the one great wonder of the universe!—the masterpiece of the great God! It is this which shall bind all worlds to the throne of the ever-blessed God! It is this which shall wake up the sweetest pæans in the heavenly world! It is this which, through the mighty roll of everlasting ages, shall fill the courts of God Almighty with sounding praise!—to the glory of God the Father!

A few inferences, and I have done.

1. Here we have an unanswerable argument for the truth of the Christian religion—a doctrine such as we have now been considering; a doctrine of such mingled sweetness and grandeur, so worthy of God, and so suited to man; such a doctrine, if unrevealed, I firmly believe, could never have entered the mind of man. Woe to the infidel—he must meet a fiery day!

2. How invaluable must the soul of man be! To create worlds and systems required no great array of means. God spake, and it was done! He commanded, and it stood fast! But to redeem the soul of man, all heaven must be moved! The Lord of angels must become incarnate, must suffer, and bleed; and agonize, and die. In other words, there must be a mighty draft, not upon the resources of nature, but upon the resources of nature's God.

“Heaven weeps, that man might smile,  
Heaven bleeds, that man may never die.”

3. How dreadful is the guilt, and how terrible must be the doom of those who reject such a Saviour! They reject—whom? A dying Saviour, who is God's eternal

Son! They reject—whom? The world's last and only hope! There is salvation in none else; and the sinner, dying without an interest in this Saviour, is accursed forever! He is turned over to wrath and despair! He sinks down in the deep grave of sorrow, and no angel voice, no resurrection trump shall wake him up to hope and joy any more! O sinner! sinner! You have rejected this Saviour already too long. O! be entreated to reject him no more! Submit now. This may be your last call, your last day!

4. How great will be the happiness of the redeemed in heaven!—After such preparation and such cost, to bring them to that blessed world above, how dear, O how precious will they be in the eyes of Him who brought them there! How will He beautify them with salvation! How will He pour into their souls the full tide of heavenly and never-ending joy! “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him.”

O heaven! sweet heaven! The dwelling-place of love and joy! the purchase of a Saviour's blood; the Christian's rest, the pilgrim's home! O heaven, sweet heaven! There rolls the river of pleasure! there flourishes the tree of life! there saints and angels, mingling their splendors, have one continued festival, one never-ending jubilee! “Visions of glory! how ye crowd upon my aching sight!” Praise God from the heavens; praise him in the heights! Praise ye him, all his angels; praise ye him, all his hosts! Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light! Praise ye him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye

waters that be above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord. Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons, and all deeps. Fire, and hail, and snow, and vapor, and stormy wind fulfilling his word. Mountains, and all hills; fruitful trees, and all cedars; beasts, and all cattle; creeping things, and flying fowl; kings of the earth, and all people; princes, and all judges of the earth; both young men, and maidens, old men, and children; let them praise the Lord: for his name alone is excellent, his glory is above the earth and heaven. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in the firmament of his power; praise him for his mighty acts; praise him according to his excellent greatness; praise him with the sound of the trumpet; praise him with the psaltery and harp; praise him with the timbrel and dance; praise him with stringed instruments and organs; praise him upon the loud cymbals, praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul!

## SERMON IV.

## THE USES OF THE LAW.

Wherefore then serveth the law?—GALATIANS iii. 19.

My brethren, the great doctrines of grace were precious doctrines with the apostle Paul. Although he was a man of blameless morality, of ardent piety, of quenchless and untiring zeal; although he was a man who had done and suffered more in the cause of his divine Master than any other man, probably, that ever lived; yet, when he comes to speak of his acceptance with his Maker, he makes no mention of any of these things. "Christ is all his hope, and grace is all his song." He relies upon the finished righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, imputed to him, and received by faith alone. This doctrine, so humbling to the pride of the human heart, the apostle gloried in; and on more occasions than one, he enters into an argument to show how utterly impossible it is for the sinner to obtain justification with God in any other way. In the third chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, he enters fully upon the subject, and winds up in this way: "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." In the next chapter he presents the same idea, but in language still stronger and more decisive: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Presenting the doctrine of justification



by the imputed righteousness of Christ, and that alone, in a manner so clear and strong, the apostle was aware that some might charge him with Antinomian sentiments; as if he undervalued the law; as if he would set it aside as a dead letter, and thus encourage men to continue in sin, that grace might abound. How does he meet this cavil? How does he repel this charge? With holy indignation! "Do we then make void the law through faith?" says he. "God forbid! yea, we establish the law." He insists upon it that the doctrine of justification by faith in the Redeemer, and by that alone, is a wholesome doctrine, has no licentious tendency whatever, but is the very doctrine which honors the law, and secures its best obedience.

And now, going in the wake of the apostle, I wish, before laying before you the uses of the law, to give a bird's-eye view of the doctrine of justification. In the matter of the sinner's acceptance with God, we firmly believe that good works form no part whatever—"the death of Christ must still remain sufficient and alone." If the sinner were a thousand times better than he is, that would be no ground of hope; if he were a thousand times worse than he is, that need be no ground of despair; for, mark, if he were a thousand times better than he is, he never could be saved without coming to Christ; if a thousand times worse than he is, coming to Christ, in the overflowings of a penitent and believing heart, he would immediately be encircled in the arms of God's parental and forgiving love. So that, (and I repeat it,) in the matter of the sinner's acceptance with God, (so far as

merit in the sinner is concerned,) good works form no part whatever. "The death of Christ must still remain sufficient and alone." Do any charge me with Antinomian sentiments, and say, "O, sir, is not that a dangerous doctrine?" I repel the charge, as the apostle did, with holy indignation. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law: we insist upon it that the doctrine of justification by the righteousness of Christ, and that alone, is most wholesome, and is the very doctrine which prompts to the best obedience. Do you ask, How? I answer in this way: The sinner is awakened. Finding himself under the curse of God's righteous law, he is alarmed, and goes about to make satisfaction, to establish his own righteousness; in other words, he tries to save himself. After many efforts, finding no relief in that way, he comes to the conviction that he is indeed a poor, lost, ruined sinner; and when he is ready to give up, and thinks that there is no hope for him, then Christ is revealed in his heart, the hope of glory; the effect is, Christ becomes precious!—love becomes the ruling passion of the soul; and we all know that love will make us do what nothing else possibly can. Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law. But some one may then say, "If justification cannot come by the law, wherefore then serveth the law?" Should I say that food cannot clothe us, do I say that food is of no use? Should I say that clothing cannot feed us, am I crying down the use of clothing? Certainly not. Everything is good in its own place, and for its own use. Even so in the case

before us. Faith serves to justify the soul before God, and good works serve to justify faith before men. In other words, one is the fruit-bearing tree; the other the fruit itself, which this good tree bears. Having given this brief bird's-eye view of the doctrine of justification, I proceed next to lay before you some of the most important uses of the law.

I. One important use of the law is to declare the sovereignty of God—to assert his supreme and everlasting dominion over us. Some minute philosophers, after descanting upon the amplitude and wonders of creation, tell us that “man is but an atom of an atom world,” and therefore too insignificant to be noticed by the great God; but let it be remembered that there is, so to speak, a twofold universe; a universe of worlds and systems, and also a universe of minute existences—animalcules, for example, so exceedingly minute, that it would require a thousand of them to occupy the space of a grain of sand! And now, if, in comparison with the one universe, man dwindles into insignificance and becomes “an atom of an atom world,” in comparison with the other universe, man rises into vast importance—becomes a giant, a colossus, a world, a universe in himself, and therefore worthy of notice—the minute philosopher himself being judge. But this matter apart: the law itself proves that, however insignificant man is, in comparison with the immensity of the works of God, he is deemed of sufficient importance to be made the subject of divine legislation. The very existence of the law proves this; whilst its compass makes known God's determination to embrace all men, and all

their actions; and its spirituality proves the purpose of God to lay his hand upon the very springs of action. And, to crown the whole, the penalty of the law shows the divine determination to notice every violation of the law, and to suffer it in no case to be trampled upon with impunity. My brethren, it is a good thing to have the sceptre of the God of heaven over us; but a still better thing, if possible, to know that this sceptre is over us. Now this law is a standing memorial of the fact: it declares that God is our sovereign; that we are recognized as the subjects of his moral government; and that we should act accordingly. Certainly this is a very important and most excellent use of the law.

2. A second and very important use of the law, is to furnish a perfect code of moral precepts; and that it is perfect, we have demonstrated, as we think, in our first discourse.\* But the evidence thereof may also be seen in the very remarkable fact, that no one, so far as I know, has ever suggested an amendment. Our representatives in Congress, embracing the collected wisdom of the nation, are annually engaged in making laws, and amending and repealing them, and making new laws: but here we have a code of laws given more than three thousand years ago, and, if I mistake not, no enlightened and virtuous man has ever desired their amendment or repeal. In this point of view, then, the moral law, as given in the Bible, is of great use, of immense value.

3. Another important use of the law is to curb the wicked—to hold them in check. The prohibitions of the

\* See page 17.



law are as so many mountain barriers placed in the way of the transgressor; and when these barriers are passed, then comes the penalty of the law, like some mighty angel standing in the path of the transgressor, with a drawn sword in his hand, threatening to cleave him down, and thundering in his ear at every step the much needed warning—"Stand in awe, and sin not!" But,

4. The law is of use to convince the sinner that he is a sinner, a great sinner, lost, ruined, and undone. "By the law," says the apostle, "is the knowledge of sin." It may be considered as a mirror, in which the sinner sees the defects and obliquities of his own moral character; or as a kind of balance, in which sinners and their actions are weighed and found wanting. Now, let any candid man take the ten commandments—let him read them all over carefully; and, reviewing his life, let him say, if he can, "All these commandments I have strictly kept from my youth up; I have broken not one." No, he cannot, but must rather say, with Job—"If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse." But the law is of use, not only to convince the sinner that he is a sinner, but that he is a great sinner; that his sins are very numerous, and of great magnitude; only let him take the law of the ten commandments, and read it, in connection with our Saviour's sermon upon the mount, expounding its extent and spirituality; and, if I mistake not, he will have such views of himself as he never had before. Sins of omission, and sins of commission; sins of thought, of word, and of deed, how very many! And O! if the Spirit of

God should pour light upon the mind of the sinner, and set home the claims of the law upon his conscience with divine power, methinks he will better understand the language of Eliphaz to Job: "Is not thy wickedness great, and thine iniquities infinite?" "I was alive without the law, once," says the apostle, "but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Time was, when he thought himself no great sinner; "his hopes of heaven were firm and bright," but when the commandment came, with a convincing power and light, his views were changed, and he had to confess himself to be a great sinner, yea, even the chief of sinners. The language of the poet, I presume, many in this assembly can well understand:

"My sins appeared but small before,  
Till terribly I saw  
How perfect, holy, just, and pure,  
Was thine eternal law.  
Then felt my soul the heavy load  
My sins revived again;  
I had provoked a dreadful God,  
And all my hopes were slain!"

But the law is of use to convince the sinner that he is a great sinner, by its dreadful penalty. In human legislation, it is deemed a matter of vital importance to proportion, as far as possible, the punishment to the offence; and if this principle be flagrantly violated, all cry out against the law. For example: suppose the legislature of this State should make a law of this kind, that whoever shall be convicted of murder in the first degree, shall be fined one dollar, and imprisoned one hour. Would not

all cry out against that law?—and why? Because the proportion between the punishment and the offence is not maintained. What! the penalty for wilful murder only one dollar fine, and one hour imprisonment! This will never do! Well, suppose, at the next session of the legislature this law should be repealed, and a law of this kind enacted:—If a person shall defraud another to the amount of five dollars, upon conviction thereof, he shall suffer death, without benefit of clergy? Would not all intelligent persons throughout the State cry out against this law also?—and why? For the same reason as in the other case—the principle of proportioning the punishment to the offence is not regarded. Now, if this principle be important in human governments, why may it not be in the divine? The Ruler of the universe must certainly fully understand this matter, and be aware of its immense importance. And now, what is the penalty of the divine law? “The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” “Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that sinneth.” “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them.” That is, according to the Scriptures, every sin deserves the wrath and curse of God, both in this life and that which is to come; or in other words, everlasting perdition is the penalty of God’s violated law. This, my brethren, is an awful penalty. Now, then, if the sinner be not a great sinner, one of two things must be true—either that God lacks understanding, or he is a malignant being! Certainly he does not lack understanding, for he is the “Only Wise God.” He cannot lack understand-

ing, for is he not the unoriginated Source of all intelligence? No! no! his understanding is infinite. He knows precisely the true demerit of sin, and he knows perfectly how to proportion the punishment to the offence; this must be admitted by all: then, if the sinner still denies that he is a great sinner, he must come to this frightful and blasphemous conclusion, that God, knowing full well how to proportion the punishment to the offence, fixes the penalty vastly beyond what he knows to be just! O! my friends, this cannot be, for God is Love, and he has given the most affecting proof of his kind regards for man, by sending his only begotten and well-beloved Son to die for our sinful race. God, then, being infinitely wise, and knowing precisely what sin deserves—being infinitely good, and having no disposition to make the penalty too severe, it follows necessarily that, whether the sinner is convinced of it or not, in the sight of God he is a great sinner, an awful sinner, a hell-deserving sinner!

There are several reasons why the sinner may not be sensible of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and consequently of his own demerit as a sinner. 1. He knows not the excellence of the law which he has violated. The more excellent a law is, and the more intimately connected it may be with matters of vital importance, the greater is the crime of violating that law. To illustrate my meaning: In the world of nature, the principle of gravitation is a principle of vital importance, causing all worlds and things to maintain their proper stations, and move in beautiful and delightful harmony. Now, suppose



a blow could be given to that principle of gravitation, deranging the harmony of all worlds, and causing worlds and systems to dash together in wild confusion; would not that blow, thus given, and thus operating, be a very serious matter? Now, let it be remembered, that what the principle of gravitation is in the natural world, the principle of love is in the moral world—that which binds everything in harmony with each other, and all to the throne of God; therefore, all the requirements of the law, being summed up in love, as the Saviour teaches, sin, which breaks the law, of course strikes a blow at this principle of moral harmony; and, O! in the frightful history of human depravity, and in the present sad condition of our fallen world, we have an exhibition of the nature of sin, showing that, of a truth, it is no light matter, but is an evil of unspeakable magnitude. It wars against love, and against the well-being and happiness of all the creatures which God has made.

Another reason why the sinner may not be duly conscious of the fact, is this, that he does not reflect, as he should, upon the character of that Being against whom his sin is committed. It is not against a man, a worm like ourselves, nor an angel, but against the great God of heaven and earth, to whom also we are indebted for our existence, and every blessing, that he has sinned; as the Psalmist says, "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and have done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest; and be clear when thou judgest." If a man strike a blow at another, it is a violation of law, and deserves punishment; if the person who

was struck was a master, or a father, venerable by reason of silvery locks and hoary age, the offence is greater, and deserves a severer punishment. But suppose the person upon whom the blow was inflicted to be a king, a lawful monarch upon his throne, in robes of royalty—certainly the offence would be still greater, and the punishment deserved still more condign: thus the criminality of the act and its punishment must be graduated by the character or the dignity of the person against whom the offence has been committed. Now, sin strikes a blow at the Eternal God! our Heavenly Father, our Divine Master, the Ancient of Days, and the alone Monarch of all worlds! Yes, sin strikes a blow at this great and glorious Being; pouring contempt upon all the perfections of his character, and doing what it can to lay his sacred honors in the dust. Now, if the principle of graduation be correct, (and certainly it is,) then, God being an infinite being, sin against him is an offence of infinite magnitude, and deserving of infinite punishment.

But yet another reason why the sinner may not understand the exceeding sinfulness of sin and his own demerit, is this—he does not think how much evil may flow from one sinful act. “Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!” A single spark of fire may be considered a small matter, but let it be struck in a magazine of gunpowder, or let it kindle upon a dwelling, in a large city, and it may extend, and extend, and extend, until the whole city is laid in ruins! Here is a lake, having a smooth surface; a stone is cast into that lake; ripples are formed, and their concentric circles spread, and spread,

and spread, until, perchance, they sweep the farthest shore! Here are a thousand crystal pillars, of immense value, upon a level plain, all standing in a row. An impulse is given to the first, which throws it down; in falling, that pillar strikes a second, and that, in falling, strikes a third; and so on to the last—and lo! a thousand crystal pillars lie shattered upon the ground, all traced to the single impulse given to the first pillar! Here is a man, a father; in the presence of his little boy he utters an oath; that little boy catches that oath from his father's lips—he becomes profane—and through all time profaneness is handed down, it may be from generation to generation, until it leads, perchance, to the perdition of a hundred thousand souls! O! think of the frightful consequences of the first sin committed by the first human pair. One poet says, and very correctly,

“Our mother took the poisoned fruit,  
And tainted all our blood.”

And another graphically says,

“Her rash hand, in evil hour,  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat!  
Earth felt the wound; and Nature, from her seat,  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost!”

No man knows, or can know, all the bearings and ultimate effects of sin; for the consequences thereof may not only flow down the long stream of time, but through the wide ocean of eternity! The fact is, it is none but God who knows, or can know, what a dreadful evil sin

is! In fixing the penalty of the law, he has given his estimate of it. This is his judgment, and we are sure his judgment is true. Of course, then, whether the sinner be sensible of it or not, he is a great sinner. O excellent use of the law, to convince the sinner that tremendous guilt lies upon his soul! This conviction is wholesome; this conviction is necessary;—for, if not convinced of our sin, we shall never feel as we should our need of a Saviour. “The whole,” says the Saviour, “have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.” “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Be entreated then, my unconverted friends, not to brace yourselves up against conviction. Be willing to know the truth, however it may startle you, and humble you, and lay your soul in the dust;—for, thank God, “it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—even the chief. But to proceed. In speaking of the claims and penalties of the law, some may object to its severity, in several things. For example, when they hear the sentence announced, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them;”—perceiving that the “moral man,” so called, if a sinner at all, is as truly brought under the curse of the law as the greatest transgressor, they think that this is not just. What! one single sin exposing the soul to the penalty of the law? Yes, certainly, in the very nature of the case, this must be so. Here is a man who has burned down the house of his neighbor. He is arrested, he is convicted of the crime of arson. What is the penalty for arson in this



commonwealth? Is it imprisonment? or is it death? No matter what it is, the person convicted of burning down one house, is as certainly exposed to the penalty as if he had burned down a thousand. Now, if this principle is admitted to be correct in human law, why should it not also be deemed correct in the divine law? Besides, does not the apostle James say, "He that offendeth in one point, is guilty of all?" If one link in a chain be broken, the chain as certainly falls to the ground as if every link had been broken. I do not say that the pangs of the second death will be as great for one transgressor as for another; but it is certain, that the second death awaits every transgressor, according to the provisions of the law; for we repeat it, it is written, and it must stand forever, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them."

Another objection is based upon the doctrine of everlasting punishment, which the law denounces. The point of the objection is this—that a person should be everlastingly punished, in the world to come, for the sins committed in this brief state of existence. "There is no proportion," says the objector, "between the time occupied in the commission of sin and the duration of the punishment." And is there any reference to the time occupied in human law? Here is a man who draws a pistol, fires it, and, in one second of time, his enemy falls dead at his feet! He is arrested—he is tried for wilful murder. All the witnesses agree that he did fire the pistol, and did thus murder the man. Now, the lawyer rises to plead for his client at the bar—and some of these law-

yers, we know, are very learned and ingenious—but did you ever hear a single lawyer bring forward an argument of this kind?—"May it please the court, my client stands indicted on a charge of murder; I admit that my client did murder the deceased, but I wish your Honor and the gentlemen of the jury to notice that it did not take my client twenty years to perpetrate the deed; nor ten, nor even one! It was the work of a second. I hope the court will perceive that the offence is a trifling one, and that your Honor, without further delay, will direct the sheriff to dismiss the jury!" Did you ever hear of any lawyer, learned or not, making a speech of this kind? I suspect not. Well, the judge gives the charge. Did you ever hear a judge give a charge of this kind?—"Gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the testimony and all the pleadings in the present case; and now it only remains for me to give you the charge. Gentlemen of the jury, two points will engage your attention. First, matter of fact; secondly, matter of law. With regard to the first point—you have heard the testimony of the witnesses, and the case is admitted, even by the counsel for the prisoner, to be clear; he murdered the man, and now it only remains for me to instruct you in the matter of the law. Gentlemen of the jury, you are to inquire, diligently, how long it took the prisoner at the bar to murder the deceased. If it took him twenty years, it is a great offence against the law, and calls for a heavy punishment. If it took him ten years, it is only half as great an offence, and deserves only half that punishment. If it took one year, it is only one-twentieth part as serious an offence; but if

you find evidence to believe that the perpetration of the deed occupied no more than a second of time, it is a matter of no consequence at all, and you will clear the prisoner!"

Did you ever hear, my brethren, of any learned judge giving a charge of this kind? He had better not. It would be a rightful ground of impeachment. Human law lays no stress upon the time occupied in the violation of the law; the simple question is touching the fact of violation. That fact established, the penalty follows as a matter of course, whether the time occupied has been long or short. If this principle be correct in human law, why may it not also be correct in that law which is divine? But further: does not the law of the land also, in many cases, recognize and act upon the principle of everlasting punishment? Here is a man convicted of murder, and he is sentenced to die. Do you ever see him at the ballot-box any more? Do you ever see him on the street, in the store, at the neighbor's house, or even at his own home any more? The other day he was a freeman, and invested with all the rights and privileges of a good citizen; but by the law of the land he is stripped of these rights and privileges, and stripped of them forever. But take another case—the case of confinement for life in the penitentiary. The man is there; if he lives five years, he is there five years. If he lives ten years, he is there ten years. If he lives twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years, he is there still, and never comes out. The idea is this: Human law was made for the body; it grasps the body of the offender, as it were, with an iron grasp, and never

lets go so long as it can retain that grasp; that is, until the body dies. Even so the divine law, made for the soul, grasps the soul, and will not let go so long as it can retain its grasp; that is, until the soul dies: but the soul never dies, therefore the punishment is everlasting

This is an argument which, I humbly conceive, cannot be set aside by the wit or ingenuity of any man, especially as it falls in with the solemn declaration of our blessed Saviour: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Another idea connected with the subject is this—that those who die in an unregenerate state go to the world of woe with the carnal mind, which is enmity against God. They will, according to the Scriptures, blaspheme the God of heaven, because of their pains, and repent not; that is, they will continue to sin; and if they continue to sin, may not God continue to punish them? Remember the closing words of the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew: "These" (the wicked) "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Let none trifle with matters of such immense importance. Go, careless sinner, trifle with the forked lightning! Go, trifle with the sweeping whirlwind, and trifle with the raging pestilence! But trifle not, O trifle not with the interests of that immortal soul of yours, which must be saved or lost, happy or miserable, through all eternity!

But, as we have said, the law is of use to convince the sinner not only that he is a sinner, and a very great sinner, but that he is also a sinner lost, ruined, and undone. The argument is this: The law demands perfect obe-



dience. The penalty is death. The sinner has broken the law, and the law thunders out, "Satisfaction or death;" but the sinner can make no satisfaction. Repentance will not do. Will the merchant take tears in payment for what is due him? or will repentance release the murderer under sentence of death? Nor will reformation answer. If the debtor says to the merchant creditor, "If you will cancel my debt, I will get in your debt no more; I will turn over a new leaf, and will pay cash in all time to come." Will that satisfy the merchant? Or, if the murderer condemned to die should say to the judge who has pronounced the sentence, "I will commit murder no more;" will this satisfy the judge, or rather the law, of which he is but the organ? O no! if all debtors were released, and all criminals pardoned on these terms, the very foundations of society would be broken up, and the most important affairs of human life would be thrown into perfect confusion, and the consequences to the community would be most alarming. No, my brethren, sin is too dreadful an evil, too terrible in its tendencies, for God to treat it as a venial affair. For the good of the universe the law must speak this language—"Satisfaction or death." The sinner himself can make no satisfaction—then the sinner stands exposed to the penalty, like the culprit whose head is upon the block, and exposed to the axe of the executioner.

But this leads me to mention yet another use of the law, and one which I love to mention. It is this:—To convince the sinner that he needs a Saviour, and without an interest in the atoning sacrifice of the great Redeemer,

he must perish, without mercy and without hope! "The law," says the apostle, "is a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." All its precepts and all its penalties—all its lightnings and all its thunders have a direct and powerful tendency to cut the sinner off from all his self-righteous plans and self-righteous dependence, and to shut him up to the plan proposed in the gospel. It may be represented thus: The law finds the sinner careless and secure in his sins; setting before the sinner its claims and penalties, it charges home guilt upon his soul. The sinner, waking up in alarm, promises repentance. "How can tears on earth wash out those sins written in heaven?" says the law. "Pay what thou owest! The soul that sinneth, it shall die!" "O spare me!" cries the sinner; "I will not only repent of my sins, but I will reform. I will become a better man." "All in vain," says the law; "a better sacrifice is required; without the shedding of blood, there is no remission." "O, well," says the sinner, yet more alarmed, "if it must be so, I consent; I am willing to lay down my life as an atonement for my sins!" "Neither will this answer," says the law; "you have sinned against an infinite God, and divine justice demands an infinite atonement, or death. Thou canst not make this atonement; then prepare for death. Now hear your sentence: 'Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them!'" O dreadful! the sinner is condemned! is sentenced to eternal death! What is to be done? Let him cry for mercy! The law knows no mercy; stern and inexorable, it still rolls its thunders over the sinner's soul—"Cursed is every

one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them." And now all the sinner's legal plans and legal hopes are fled, and fled forever! Under the curse of God's righteous law, he is sinking down—sinking down! Despair is gathering its terrors around him! and now he gives himself up for lost. But hark! what sweet voice is that? "Poor sinner! dying sinner! look from the borders of the pit to my recovering grace!" "Is this thy voice, my Saviour—my loving, bleeding, dying Lord?" says the sinner. "Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer! welcome to this heart of mine! O, blessed Saviour! I take thee on thy terms, on any terms!

" 'Here, Lord, I give myself away,  
'Tis all that I can do!' "

A stern master, as the story goes, had, by his repeated corrections, embittered the life of a poor slave. This poor slave sought comfort in religion, and found it. Laid upon a bed of death, he was very happy; ready to depart and to be with Christ, which was far better. At this moment his stern master stepped into his room, and stood near his dying bed. The dying slave perceived his master, and, with much emotion, grasped his master's hand, and brought it to his lips, and kissed it, saying, "Blessings upon this hand! Blessings upon this hand! This hand has saved my soul!" So the sinner, brought to Christ by the terrors of the law, may say, "Blessings upon the law! Blessings upon the law! It was stern and severe—it humbled me, it scourged me—it taught me that I was a sinner, a great sinner, a sinner lost, ruined, and undone;

it made me feel my need of a Saviour; it was a school-master to bring me to Christ! Blessings upon the law! in this way it has saved my soul!" May the law do its office upon the heart of every sinner in this assembly this morning! Amen and Amen!

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## SERMON V.

### THE SINNER WEIGHED AND FOUND WANTING.

Tekel; thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting.—DANIEL v. 27.

AMIDST the darkness of heathenish ignorance and superstition, there have not been wanting plain and unequivocal evidences of a superintending and retributive Providence. Pharaoh was visited with memorable judgments for refusing to let the children of Israel go; and history informs us that not only Belshazzar, (to whom the words of our text immediately apply,) but Antiochus Epiphanes, Galerius Maximus, and many others, were signally punished for their daring impiety. With regard to Belshazzar, he was a most dissolute monarch. Neglecting the affairs of his empire, he gave himself up to every excess of riot and debauchery: but the measure of his iniquity was now full. The period was at last arrived when he should reckon with his God. On one of the national festivals, (supposed to be in honor of the golden image which had been set up by Nebuchadnezzar in the plains of Dura,) Belshazzar, the king, we are told, made a great feast to a



thousand of his lords, and drank wine before the thousand; and, as if it were not enough that he should be a bacchanalian, he must needs add sacrilege to his intemperance. In the midst of his banquetings, he orders the golden vessels, which had been brought from Jerusalem, and placed in the temple of Belus, in Babylon—he orders, I say, these golden vessels to be brought into the banqueting-room, that his princes, his wives, and his concubines might drink wine therein; thus turning to a profane use those vessels which had been consecrated, and set apart for the most sacred purposes. But there was a righteous God on high! There was an avenging angel just at hand!

Whilst Belshazzar was thus making an ostentatious parade of his wealth and grandeur; whilst he was drinking wine to gods of gold, and of silver, of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone—in the midst of his revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries—in the very same hour of the night came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick, upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace. The king saw it, and his countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him. The king saw it; and the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another. The king saw it; and he cried out in alarm, and commanded to bring in the astrologers, the Chaldeans, and the soothsayers. They came; they saw the writing, but they could neither read it nor give the interpretation thereof. At length, by the advice of the queen mother, Daniel is called in. He read the writing; he gave the interpretation thereof. The

words are few, but indeed they are full of terror! "Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin:"—one of which we have selected for our consideration, "Tekel;" the meaning of which is, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." How dreadful the interpretation! Weighed in the balances, and found wanting! Alas! the trial is over; the decision is made; the sentence is gone forth; and all this announced in a manner so awful, so mysterious! Methinks it fell upon Belshazzar's ear as the sudden pealing thunder of a midnight storm! Hushed is the voice of mirth. Silent the song of revelry. The king and his courtiers, stupified with amazement, await in awful suspense the unseen but hovering judgment. For a moment the palace, which had been ringing with all manner of music, and the songs of mirth and revelry, is wrapt in the solitude and silence of the grave. Suddenly the silence is broken. The voice of alarm rings along the streets! it is the clashing of arms; the shrieks of the wounded, the groans of the dying, commingled with the thundering shouts of a victorious foe. The Lord God Almighty has opened to Cyrus the gates of brass, and has broken in sunder the bars of iron. Babylon is taken! Soldiers crowd into the palace—Belshazzar is slain. O, disastrous night! where is Belshazzar's pomp and glory now? He was flushed with wine; but he is now icy cold in death! His royal robes, of gold and purple, are torn and rolled in his own blood. The impious monarch, in the midst of his bacchanalian debauch, is hurried to the bar of a thrice holy God. You tremble, perchance, at the doom which awaits him. O sinner! sinner! think of Belshazzar

and be wise. Are you shocked that I should insinuate a comparison between you and this wicked king? Remember, you live in a gospel land; Belshazzar lived not in a gospel land. You have a Bible; Belshazzar had no blessed Bible. You have heard of the dear, dying, Saviour; Belshazzar never heard of this great Legate from the skies. And remember, you must be weighed in the balances too; and what though you be not found as much wanting as Belshazzar, if found wanting at all, in the great day of judgment, you will be forever undone.

My purpose is not to sketch the character of this impious and idolatrous king, but to bring forward two classes of characters, and weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary. The first class of characters will embrace those who are heterodox in sentiment—those who embrace some fundamental error. The second class will consist of those who may be very orthodox or correct in sentiment, but are not so in practice. All these we purpose now to weigh in the balances of the sanctuary—and, let it be remembered, it does not need the forms and solemnities of the judgment-day to ascertain any given character. Here, in the Scriptures before me, we have the balances of the sanctuary; and, if weighed in these, and found wanting, you may be as sure it is according to the decision of Heaven, as if it were actually announced, in a voice of thunder, from the throne of the Great Eternal! To the law and to the testimony, if it speak not according to this, it is because there is no light in them.

Class I. Those who are heterodox in sentiment, or those who embrace fundamental error.

1. The Atheist.—When we look abroad upon the heavens, and mark the garniture of the sky; when we contemplate our own bodies, so fearfully and wonderfully made; or when we look around, and observe the proofs of design on every hand, it really seems astonishing that any man in his senses should deny the existence of a God. But as Spinoza and Vaninni, and several members of the French Convention, advocated atheistical sentiments, we are disposed to believe that some persons, in the plenitude of their pride, may, peradventure, persuade themselves that there is no God. Now, on the supposition that there is such a character, let the atheist be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. What says the Psalmist? “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.” Ps. xiv. 1. And this is condemnatory; but what is the language of Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans? “The invisible things of Him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Now, if atheists in pagan lands are without excuse, certainly those who live amid the splendors of gospel day are also without excuse. The atheist, then, being weighed in the balances, is found wanting. But,

2. Let the Deist next be placed in the balances. There have been deists, no doubt, in every age; but this name was assumed by certain persons in France and Italy, who, although inclined to atheistical sentiments, chose rather to be called deists. Deists differ in many things, but agree in one particular, viz: in rejecting the sacred volume



as a divine inspiration. Now to the law and to the testimony. In Rev. xxii. 19, it is thus written: "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city." But the deist or infidel takes away not only a part—he takes away the whole of God's blessed word. If this should meet the eye of an infidel or deist, he will, no doubt, be disposed to smile at my simplicity—that I should presume to weigh him in the balances of the sanctuary. He rejects these balances, which are suspended, as it were, from the throne of Almighty God, and he would be weighed in balances of his own—balances framed by his own deceitful heart, and poised aloft by Apollyon, the angel of the burning pit. Deluded mortal! How dost thou know that thy balances are correct? What angel whispered it in thine ear? To what high authority wilt thou appeal? Deluded mortal! I ask again, How dost thou know that thy balances are correct? Who stamped them? Now these balances of the sanctuary are divinely stamped. They bear the stamp of prophecy; the stamp of miracles; the stamp of holiness;—they bear many a clear stamp divine. If the balances of the infidel be correct, how comes it to pass that the champion of infidelity\* recanted when he was sick, and cried aloud in terror when he died? How comes it to pass that one in the hour of death said—"I am taking a leap into the dark;"† and another cried out—"O, the insufferable pangs of hell and damnation."‡ Ah! my readers, you have heard, it may be, of many an infidel

\* Voltaire.

† Hobbes.

‡ Francis Newport.

recanting on a bed of death ; did you ever hear of a Christian then recanting? You have heard, no doubt, of many an infidel, when he was about to die, sending for some Christian to comfort him. Did you ever hear of a single Christian, in such circumstances, sending for some infidel to comfort him? No, never! Infidels, and those associated with them, are frequently seen going on, right merrily, in the broad road, pointing the finger of scorn at pilgrims in the narrow way ; but whence is it, that when the river of death heaves into sight, they are usually so desirous of taking a short cut, to pass over at the Christian's fording place? Why do they, generally, not like their own fording place? Ah! too many fearful things are there! Frequently despair is there! remorse is there! and heavy clouds of wrath! But to the law and to the testimony. Hear the language of the Saviour, and observe, it was uttered in his last interview with his disciples, just as he was about to ascend up into heaven: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Mark xvi. 15, 16. The case is settled. The deist or infidel, dying in that state, dies without hope!

3. Let the Legalist be weighed next; and by the legalist, I mean the self-righteous man, he who, valuing himself on account of the supposed excellence of his own moral character, feels no need of a Saviour, and, consequently, neglects the great salvation. Doubtless there are some of this class in this assembly. Let the legalist then be placed in the balances. Now "to the law and

to the testimony." What has the legalist to weigh against the requirements of the law? Nothing, except it be a righteousness absolutely perfect; for it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law, to do them?" And where is the man who has, strictly speaking, continued in all things written in the book of the law, to do them? In other words, where is the individual who has never sinned? There is none upon the face of the earth, for the Bible says expressly, "There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." And the apostle John says, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." And again, in language yet yet more emphatic, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." The legalist, then, has no perfect righteousness of his own, and therefore has nothing to weigh against the requirements of the law. And what has he to weigh against the requirements of the gospel? Nothing, except it be the imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; but this, you will observe, on his own principles, he has nothing to do with. Then see how the case stands. The legalist, or self-righteous man, has nothing to weigh against the requirements of the law; nor has he anything to weigh against the requirements of the gospel. Alas! alas! self-righteous man, thou art in an evil case! "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting!"

4. Let the Universalist be next weighed in the balances of the sanctuary. The Universalist of the modern stamp believes that all, no matter how wicked they may have

been, will go to heaven when they die. If so, why did the Saviour say, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not, shall be damned;" and, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." On the principles of the Universalist, these solemn declarations of the Saviour have no meaning at all; or if they have, they mean the very opposite of what they express, even this: Whether ye repent or not, ye shall not perish; he that believeth not, shall not be damned; and, whether a man be born again or not, he shall certainly see the kingdom of God; aye, shall certainly reach heaven—all Bible declarations to the contrary notwithstanding. O! what awful trifling with the Scriptures have we here! But the Universalist may say: The change required takes place in death. Where is this doctrine taught in all the Bible? Point me out the chapter and the verse, if you can! Whilst nothing of that kind can be found in all the sacred volume, we find it thus written: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccl. ix. 10. Again: "The night cometh, when no man can work." Again: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Rev. xxii. 11. And again: "The rich man also died and was buried, and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." Luke xvi. 23. But if these passages may, by wit and ingenuity, be set aside, there is one which certainly cannot, and I do think



it must settle the matter with modern Universalists forever. It is the language of the Saviour, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." We know that many do not receive Christ as the Messiah. We know that many do not believe in him at all. Now, says the Saviour, "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;" and he that dies in sin, of course must perish. But whilst there are many, very many other passages of Scripture fatal to the doctrine of universal salvation, permit me to quote only two more. "The hour cometh," says the Saviour, "when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." John v. 29. The second passage is found in Genesis vi. "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; and God said, I will destroy man from the face of the earth: but Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Now, mark, God purposes to give an awful display of his wrath and indignation against the workers of iniquity, and, at the same time, to show his special regard for righteous Noah, who had found grace in his sight. And what does he do? Why, he stretches forth the hand of his omnipotence, breaks up the fountains of the great deep, opens the windows of heaven, sends a mighty flood of waters upon the earth, and sweeps the whole world of the ungodly *right up into heaven!* Every man that was upon the face of the earth is swept right up into heaven,

except righteous Noah! and he, poor man, who had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, is left to toil and struggle, and suffer affliction here on earth; whilst the abominable ones, who were so wicked that God could not endure them on earth, are taken immediately to his bosom in heaven! Moreover, if the Universalist is right, the sexton, who puts the body down into the grave, called hell, is more to be feared than any other being in the universe. See Luke xii. 5. Men and brethren, can you believe this? Certainly not! No man in his senses can believe it—then the case is settled; the Universalist is weighed in the balances, and found wanting; and if he should have no better foundation than he now has, as sure as there is a God in heaven, he will perish, and perish forever! With regard to the Universalists of former times, otherwise called hell-redemptionists, the doctrine embraced is so completely at war with the doctrine of grace, and the whole tenor of the sacred volume, that the theory of universal salvation on that plan is now exploded; and being given up pretty much, even by its own former advocates, we need only remind you of the great gulf, which, according to the Saviour, is fixed between heaven and hell, which is never to be passed; and also remind you of the language of the Saviour in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew, and which describes the winding-up scene of the great judgment-day: “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.” Having weighed in the balances of the sanctuary those who embrace fundamental error, we proceed to bring forward—

Class II. This embraces those who may be very correct in sentiment, but are not so in practice. And,

1. Let the unrighteous be weighed in the balances of the sanctuary; and by the unrighteous man, I mean the fraudulent man, the dishonest man, the intemperate man, the gambler, the swindler, the man of cruelty and extortion; in short, all who openly and daringly trample upon the golden precept, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." O, what a long, long list of crimes has the unrighteous man to answer for! crimes various and multiform—against God—against man—against his own. He has not only neglected the lesser duties of social life, but the greater matters of the law. Against such, the blessed Saviour denounces an awful woe; but the apostle Paul, in few words, settles the matter forever: "Know ye not," says he, "that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." O, unrighteous man! openly wicked man! "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."

2. Let the worldling next be placed in the balances. Some are worldlings, who would not, and should not be esteemed unrighteous men, in the common acceptation of that term. By the worldling, I simply mean the person who loves the world, who loves it supremely; who is ready to say, "Give me riches, honors, pleasures; give

me, moreover, health, friends, and long life, and this world will do for me; I desire no better."

And now, let us view the worldling in his threefold character—as a man of fashion, a man of pleasure, and a man of business. Is he a man of fashion? He loves the praise of men more than the praise of God, the very character condemned in the sacred volume. (John xii. 43.) Is he a man of pleasure? Then, according to the prophet, he has committed two evils: "He has forsaken his Maker, the Fountain of living waters, and has hewn out unto himself broken cisterns, which can hold no water." But is he a man of business? Mark this worldling! The morning dawns; he rises, refreshed and invigorated by the slumbers of the night; but he offers no thanksgivings to God for the repose and protection of the night. He leaves his chamber without prayer. And now he goes forth to the pursuits of the day. Still mark that worldling! His head, his heart, his soul, all are fastened upon the things of this world. He has no interval of serious thought; never once does he say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" And now the shades of evening prevail; he returns to his dwelling, and is there greeted by an affectionate wife, and sweet, rosy, lovely children. Yes, the worldling, it may be, is in the midst of domestic comforts, one would think, enough to melt a heart of rock, enough to warm his whole soul into gratitude and love. But he thinks not of his heavenly Benefactor; never once says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." Alas! he suffers the mercies of Heaven to lie "forgotten in unthankfulness, and without praises die!"



He is the head of a family; he has servants, and he has children, and it is his duty to set before them a good and pious example—his bounden duty “to lure to brighter worlds, and lead the way;” but he neglects his duty. Alas! the morning and the evening sun shines upon a prayerless household. He lives as if there was no God in the heavens to inspect his conduct; as if there was no judgment bar, at which he must one day appear! The fact is, although he may not think so, he is a practical atheist. He loves the world, loves it supremely; the world is his portion, his home, his all! Now what says the Bible? “Love not the world, neither the things of the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” O worldling, worldling, listen to me! Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting! And now, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” O, think upon this. If any man ever gained the world, that man was Alexander the Great. And now, suppose, after all, that he died in sin, and is now in the world of woe; what does it all, this moment, avail him? Come along, ye worldlings, come along with me, and let us, so to speak, go to the borders of the pit, and call up the shade of Alexander the Great from the vasty deep of hell.—Where is Alexander the Great? Let him now appear! Methinks there I see him—but how changed! Is this Alexander the Great? I see no glittering crown upon his head! no royal robes invest his form!—his hand, too, it grasps no sceptre! and his mighty generals, where are they? I see them not! Is this Alexander the Great? O that sepulchral

groan! that unearthly sound, that comes rattling upon my ear: "Call me not Alexander *the great*, call me Alexander *the lost*!" Unhappy shade! and art thou indeed lost, and lost forever? "O, Alexander the Great, what wouldst thou now give in exchange for thy soul?" Another sepulchral groan, another unearthly sound!—"Give! I would give all the kingdoms I ever conquered—I would give all the sceptres I ever grasped! all the laurels I ever won!—I would give the world—ten thousand worlds, to come out of this pit of despair!" But hark! that rush of agony, that shriek of despair! The lost spirit, in hell, is sinking down, deeper, and deeper still! O worldling, worldling, think! Remember, you are now weighed in the balances, and found wanting; and I repeat the solemn interrogatory of the Saviour, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" O think upon this, before it be too late!

3. Let the profane swearer next be placed in the balances. Because of swearing, says the prophet, the land mourneth. There were profane swearers in his day; and alas! there are but too many in our times; and, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, nothing can be plainer than that they are found wanting; for the Psalmist says, "Thine enemies, O God, take thy name in vain." And what is the language of the eternal God himself? "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." This sin indicates peculiar hardihood, as it is so expressly forbidden; and what makes the matter worse, it is a kind of a gratuitous sin, being committed without

any adequate temptation. And this reminds me of the remark of an old writer, quaint, it is true, but very forcible. "The devil," says he, "sometimes turns fisherman, and when he fishes for ordinary sinners, he is willing to go to some expense; he baits his hook with the riches of the world, the honors of the world, and the pleasures of the world; but when he fishes for profane swearers, he throws them the naked hook! and they bite at the naked hook!—cheap even in the devil's account." Of a truth, profane swearing is a dreadful sin, and seems, perhaps more than any other, to be the bubbling up of sheer depravity. Thank God, some are, in mercy, made to see it, and repent before it is too late. I recollect a case; it interested me much at the time, and I think I shall never forget it. During a protracted meeting in a certain town in Kentucky, a gentleman of some considerable note called upon me at my lodgings. He wished to connect himself with the church on the following Sabbath. He had been remarkably profane, but the Lord had been merciful to him, and he was now, as he hoped, a converted man. The case was this: He once had a lovely boy, an only son; this beloved child gave evidence of early piety. When perhaps not more than nine years of age, he was laid upon a sick and dying bed. He talked sweetly about Jesus, and much about heaven. On one occasion, when near his end, he called his father to his bedside, and, with great respect and affection, said, "Papa, I wish to make one request of you before I die." "What is it, my darling?" said the weeping father, bending over his beloved and now dying

child. "O my dear son, your father is willing to do anything in the world for you; what do you wish me to do?" "Papa," said the dying child, "dear papa, *if you please, don't swear any more.*" The father, as he narrated the affecting incident, wept. Tears rolled down his cheeks. "O sir," said he to me, "I never had anything to come with such power to my soul before—the language of my dying boy, 'Papa, dear papa, *if you please, don't swear any more,*' Sir, it was blessed to my poor soul." I need only add, that the next day I saw that man seated at the table of the Lord; and may we not suppose that when he comes to die, his cherub boy will hover over his dying bed, and be the first to welcome his happy spirit home to glory and to God! And now, if there be a single profane swearer present, let me say to him, as that dear dying child did to the father whom he loved, "*If you please, don't swear any more!*"

4. Let the hollow-hearted professor of religion next be placed in the balances. Strange as it may appear, Voltaire took the sacrament of the Lord's Supper! Yes, that mouth of his, which uttered blasphemies against the Son of God—which taught treason against the divine and immaculate Jesus—that mouth received the memorials of a dying Saviour's love. Can such a solemn farce as this please a holy God? "Nay, verily, be not deceived, God is not mocked: whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." No matter what may be the profession or outward show, if the heart be not sincere and right in the sight of God, it is all as a sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal. Even if there be no wilful hypocrisy, or out-



ous blasphemy, as in the case of Voltaire, a mere profession of religion can avail nothing, for "a solemn und upon a thoughtless tongue" is a poor thing, and

"God abhors the sacrifice,  
Where not the heart is found."

Ah! my brethren, believe me, sacramental wine can never wash away the sins of the soul; nor can baptismal water cool the tongue of the false-hearted professor of religion in hell, tormented in penal flames! Professor of religion, remember the parable of the ten virgins! It is quite possible to have the lamp of profession without the oil of grace; the form, without the power of godliness. And O remember, peculiarly deep and dreadful must be the damnation of those who fall from the heights of Zion into the flames of hell! Methinks, through all eternity the thoughts of the sacramental board will haunt them; and most terrible will it be to see those who once sat down with them at the table of the Lord, now in heaven, whilst they themselves are cast out! O, then, let all who are in communion with the church now examine themselves, whether they be in the faith; remembering the words of the apostle: "Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Let all who are professors of religion dig deep and lay a good foundation, for, according to the Scriptures, the mere profession of religion, without the root of the matter, will not save the soul. The hollow-hearted professor of religion, then, having the name without the thing named, the form without the power of godliness, is weighed and found wanting.

And now, as I wish to benefit every soul present, and as some may think the preacher has not reached their case, as they do not acknowledge themselves to belong exactly to any of the characters specified, permit me to put in the balances of the sanctuary one character more, and sure I am it will embrace all who are not on their way to heaven.

5. The unrenewed, no matter who they are, or what they are, in other respects, they too are certainly wanting: for mark! if unrenewed, they have never repented of their sins; and what says the Scriptures? "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." If unrenewed, they have not believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. And what says the Bible? "He that believeth not, shall be damned." And again: "If unrenewed, they have not been born again." And what says the glorious Son of God? "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." No matter, then, my dear friends, who or what you may be, I tell you the truth in Christ Jesus, I lie not, if you have not been renewed in the temper and disposition of your souls—in other words, if you have not experienced a change of heart, and become a new creature in Christ Jesus, you are still in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and dying in that state, will certainly be lost. I have noticed that in every community there are persons who seem to be near the kingdom, but are not in it. They are amiable; they are interesting; they have some fine traits of character; but they are not converted. They remind us of what is said of Naaman. "Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man

with his master, and honorable; moreover, he was a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper." So these persons have many things to recommend them to the respect and affection of those around; but, alas! they are strangers to God's converting grace. Mark that venerable man! His locks are silvery with age; benignity is seated upon his brow; humanity lights up his faded countenance: he has a purse for the needy, a shelter for the houseless, and a heart to sympathize with the sons and daughters of affliction. Perhaps, too, the patriot's flame still burns in his aged bosom; but is this all? Alas! his knees have never been bent in humble prostration at the mercy-seat! His hands have never been lifted up in humble supplication at the throne of heavenly grace! Whilst the snows of fifty, sixty, seventy winters have been bleaching his locks, his heart has been cold, fast bound up in the ice of morality. What a pity that such a venerable man should, in the day of judgment, be found wanting! There goes an interesting young man! He has the flush of youth, joined with the discretion of riper years. He is admired and caressed, and deservedly, too, for he has an affectionate heart, a noble and a generous spirit! He is no debauchee; he is regular in all his hours, temperate in all his indulgences; no profane expressions pollute his lips; the world can see no stain in his moral character. He is the champion of morality, and even the advocate of religion. But is this all? Alas! he has entered the vestibule, but he has not entered the temple of religion. He has found many pearls, precious pearls, too, but not the "one pearl of great price." He

has many things to recommend him, like the young man in the gospel; but, like the same young man, he lacks the one thing needful; and lacking this, he lacks the key to heaven. And see, too, that interesting young female! Her temper is sweet, her manners are pleasing, her person is lovely; fair as the first rose that bloomed in Paradise, and her admirers say she has

“Grace in her steps; heaven in her eye;  
In all her gestures dignity and love.”

She is her mother's rose, her father's pride, and the life of the circle in which she moves. But is this all? Alas! she is no Mary—has not chosen that good part which should not be taken from her: her heart is upon the world—she is a “lover of pleasures more than a lover of God.” Like the interesting young man just mentioned, she has entered the vestibule, but not the temple of religion; has found many pearls, but not the “one pearl of great price;” has many things to recommend her; but, like that amiable young man, (who, perchance, may be her brother,) she, too, lacks the one thing needful; and lacking this, she lacks the key to heaven! O who will not weep when such persons, who seem to be so near the kingdom, refuse to come to Christ, and perish in their sins? But some persons may think it would be unjust in God to punish such innocent persons, and not right to send such “good-hearted” ones to the world of woe; but let it be remembered, the Bible recognizes no innocence on earth but that which consists in the forgiveness of sins; and no good-heartedness on earth but that which con-



sists in the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The fact is, according to the Scriptures, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; and hence it is written: "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And it is true of all, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." All, then, who are unrenewed, are in a state of wrath and condemnation. Weighed in the balances, they are found wanting.

And now, my dear brethren, in closing, permit me to remark: I have brought forward several classes of characters, and weighed them in the balances of the sanctuary. Have I sketched the characters correctly? Have I weighed them with an even hand? Have any of you, my dear hearers, been weighed and found wanting? O, this is a serious matter! Should the visible fingers of an invisible angel now write *tekel* over against you, upon the plaster of the wall, would not strange alarm seize upon you? Would you not, like Belshazzar, cry out in terror? And now tell me, O ye careless, Christless souls! tell me, what matters it whether the visible fingers of an invisible angel write *tekel* on the wall against you, or the finger of inspiration write it here, in this volume, as with a sunbeam? You, then, who have been weighed and found wanting, tell me, do you not believe that you must die? and dying, do you not believe that you must go to the judgment bar? and going to the judgment bar, do you not believe that you must be judged out of the things written in the sacred volume? And does not this book

now condemn you? and if so, believe me, there is nothing wanting, this moment, to fix your unhappy doom, but for God to fix your present character. And this he may do in one moment, quick as lightning, and terrible as the last trump! O, should the sun now be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood; should the stars now fall from the heavens, and the powers of the heavens be shaken; should the archangel's trump, louder than ten thousand thunders, and more awful than the hoarse crash of falling worlds, now wake up the slumbering dead! O, should you now see the Judge descending, the throne erected, the books opened, the balances, in which souls and their actions are to be weighed, poised aloft, and your souls about to be weighed—would you not tremble? Conscious that you are wanting, would not overwhelming horrors seize upon your soul? O, then, what a mercy that you did not die last night! or when you were last sick! O what a mercy that you are not now in eternity—your character fixed, your doom sealed forever! What a mercy that you are still in the land of the living—still in a state of probation, and still under hope of heavenly grace! And now what is to be done? Fly to Christ. Take refuge in his arms; for, sprinkled with his atoning blood, and found in him, you are safe. His blood cleanseth from all sin; and, arrayed in his righteousness, your souls shall find acceptance with God, and be secure amid all the thunderings and lightnings, and terrors of the judgment-day! O, sinner, fly to Christ. He is your only hope; and fly without delay. Death may be near! Eternity

may be just at the door! And, therefore, what thou doest, do quickly!

“Sinner, perhaps this very day  
 Thy last accepted time may be;  
 O, shouldst thou grieve Him now away,  
 Then hope may never beam on thee!”

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## SERMON VI.

### THE CHARACTER AND REWARD OF THE EARTHLY MINDED.

Shame shall be the promotion of fools.—PROV. iii. 35.

THE Proverbs of Solomon are full of instruction; the language may sometimes appear harsh and abrupt, but the meaning is so much the more striking and impressive. This is the case with the passage at present under consideration. “Shame shall be the promotion of fools.” Here, you will observe, the wise man calls persons of a certain description fools; and let it be remembered, he did not mean those void of reason, who are fools in a natural sense; but those who, in matters of religion, act as if they were void of reason, and therefore may be called fools in a scriptural sense. The main difference between the one and the other seems to be this: The one acts in opposition to sound reason, through lack of a good understanding; the other through lack of a right disposition. It is no uncommon thing for persons of a certain

description, proud of their own supposed wisdom, to look rather contemptuously upon the people of God, and to esteem them as poor, weak-minded, deluded ones; and sometimes they even hesitate not to pronounce them fools. This day, I trust, the tables will be turned, and this reproach will be rolled away. Our purpose, at this time, is, by simple, common sense, and scriptural argument, to establish this proposition, that all unconverted persons—that all who, taken up with the things of this world, neglect the higher interests of eternity—that they are justly chargeable with folly, supreme folly. And this, I think, will appear in the two following particulars: first, in the choice which they make; and secondly, in the conduct which they pursue.

I. In the choice which they make.—We very frequently, and very correctly, form an idea of a person's wisdom or folly from what he chooses and most values. If, for example, a person should prefer an object of real and great value to one of little or no value, as far as the case goes, we form a favorable opinion of that person's wisdom. But suppose the case be exactly the reverse. Suppose the man should prefer rags to robes, pebbles to jewels, the shadow to the substance, and counterfeit to genuine bank bills, would you pronounce him wise? I think not. And suppose, when this person is remonstrated with in regard to the folly of his choice, he should continue perseveringly to make the same foolish choice, would you not be strongly tempted to pronounce him a fool? Now why should not the principle hold just as well in spiritual as in temporal things? I think it does.



And now, what do sinners choose? They make many a foolish choice; I will state a few by way of specimen.

First.—The sinner prefers the favor of man to the favor of God. That he does so is manifest, because, whilst he is tremblingly alive to his character, as it stands in the eyes of his fellow creatures, he usually cares very little how his character stands in the eyes of his Maker. It is well known that the sinner will go to much greater lengths to please man than to please God. Nay, he will frequently do what he knows full well is displeasing to God, and that for the express purpose of securing the favor of a fellow creature! Now what does this prove? Most assuredly, that he sets a greater value upon the favor of man than upon the favor of God. And now, which is worth the most? With regard to the favor of man, if of the right kind, certainly it is of some value; and I am free to say with the poet, "Poor is the friendless master of a world!" But after all, it is well known that the favor of man is oftentimes deceitful. O how frequently do we find that they of whose favor and friendship we thought ourselves perfectly sure, strangely cool off! We cannot imagine what has wrought the change, but with regard to the fact that they are no longer our friends, that is but too clear; and, in the moment of excitement, we are ready to say, in the language of Scripture, "Cursed is the man that putteth his trust in man." But suppose this friend is a fast and faithful friend, we may be in a thousand different circumstances in which his friendship could avail us nothing. We may be laid upon a bed of sickness and languishing, and he know

nothing at all about the matter. He may be far distant; mountains may tower, or oceans roll between us; or, say he is near at hand, standing at our side, and witnessing our distress; his tears may trickle down his cheeks, and all the tenderest sympathies of his heart may be excited; nay, he may even be willing to share our sorrows with us, but in spite of all his flowing tears, and the tender sympathies of his affectionate heart, we suffer, we agonize, we die, and there is only a new display of the impotency of human friendship. Such is the favor of man, frequently fickle, and not to be relied upon; and even when of the best stamp, oftentimes of no substantial value; and yet the sinner prefers the favor of man—to what? Angels in heaven, would ye believe it?—the sinner prefers the favor of man to the favor of God! I have told you what the favor of man is worth; and now what is the value of the favor of God? O ye children of the heavenly King! ye precious sons and daughters of Zion, what do you say? I am sure the language of the Psalmist is your language: “Thy favor, O God, is life; thy loving kindness is better than life.” Yes, if I should pour down at your feet all the silver and the gold in the world, and offer that in exchange for the favor of God, would you take it? Would you not rather be ready to say, “Go and offer a monarch a bubble for his crown, and if he accepts, yet will not I.” The favor of God! Go and ask that young convert, who, for the first time in his life, has tasted that the Lord is good and gracious—that young convert whose countenance is dressed in smiles, and whose heart is now filled with a peace and joy unknown before—ask

that young convert what he thinks of the favor of God. "O!" says he, "I never knew what real happiness was until I had a sweet sense of God's forgiving love. Truly his favor is life, and his loving kindness better than life." The favor of God! Go and ask that dying Christian, just on the wing for glory—that dying Christian, just uttering those beautiful lines of Watts,

"Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are"—

Go and ask that dying Christian what he thinks of the favor of God. "The favor of God!" he replies. "O it is everything now to me. It is that which gives me now more comfort than tongue can express; it is that which softens my dying bed, and strews it all over with the roses of paradise!—it is that which brightens the dark scenery of the grave, and now raises me quite above the fear of death. O, it is infinitely more valuable to me now than ten thousand thousand worlds!" The favor of God! —Go through yonder pearly gates, and ask those bright and happy spirits who, robed and crowned, are now circling the throne, rejoicing in heaven. Go and ask them what the favor of God is worth to them. Methinks, with one voice, they would say: "It is the favor of God which makes us happy here. It is the favor of God which rolls a tide of rapture all over this eternal world of joy. It is the favor of God which makes heaven—heaven indeed to our souls!" Yes, my brethren, believe me, if the favor of God were withdrawn, angels themselves would be sad; the spirits of the just would be wrapt in gloom, and the

dwelling of the blessed would cease to charm. The favor of God! O! it is everything which men on earth, or angels in heaven can desire; and yet the sinner in his wisdom prefers the favor of man to the favor of God! That is, he prefers the rags to the robes, the pebbles to the jewels, and the shadow to the substance! Is the sinner a wise man? Judge ye!

The second foolish choice which the sinner makes is this:—He prefers the interests of the body to the interests of the soul. That he does this is evident, because with him the body is the favorite. It is fed, it is clothed, it is tenderly cherished; and when sick, O then no pains, no expense is spared to restore it to health: but the soul, alas! with the sinner it is like a poor, motherless child, sadly neglected. It may be sick nigh unto death, even the bitter pangs of the second and everlasting death, and yet it excites no interest; no provision is made for its comfort, nor even for its safety! Yes, whilst the sinner is so careful of his body, he really treats his soul as if it were a thing of no value. Now, let us compare one with the other—what is the body, and what is the soul? What is the body? It is of the earth, earthy. What is the soul? The breath of the Almighty! What is the body? It is allied to the beasts that perish. What is the soul? Allied to Him that liveth forever and ever. Whilst the body is confined to a small spot of earth, the soul ranges through the vast fields of creation, examines the beauty of the various parts, the amazing grandeur of the mighty whole. Rising above all worlds, the soul of man approaches the throne of Him whom the heaven and the



heaven of heavens cannot contain ; contemplates his eternal power and Godhead, and all the high, and all the lofty things which belong to the Divine nature. Standing, as it were, by the throne of the great Creator, it looks back to the period when, as yet, no sun had lighted up the heavens ; not a star had, as yet, glittered upon "the mantle of unessential night." Spreading its airy wings, it shoots forward into futurity, and, outstripping the roll of ten thousand thousand ages, it there hovers over the vast, the boundless ocean of eternity ; then climbing the immortal heights of the New Jerusalem, it revels in all the joys of the paradise of God ; or, cast down to fiery deeps and endless night, it converses with groans unpitied, unrespiteed ages of hopeless end. The body and the soul compared together ! O, tell me, what is the body ? "Fragile, frail as vegetation's tender leaf, or, as the passing meteor, brief ! When long this miserable frame shall have vanished from life's busy scene, that sun shall flame, those orbs shall roll, as though this dust had never been !" What is the soul ? "Immortal mind ! by grovelling matter unconfined ! the same when states and empires change ! When suns have waned, and worlds sublime their final revolutions told, the soul shall flourish over time, as though such orbs had never rolled !" And yet the sinner prefers the interests of the body to the interests of the soul. Is the sinner a wise man ? Is he not a fool ? I do not say that he is ; I lay the argument before you ; you have an understanding as well as the speaker ; judge ye !

The third foolish choice of the sinner is this : he pre-

fers temporal pleasure to eternal happiness; and in so doing, verily, he prefers the rags to the robes, the pebbles to the jewels, and the shadow to the substance. But that the sinner does make the choice which we affirm, can be known and read of all men, for his incessant cry is, "Who will show me any good?" And although the objects of pursuit are exceedingly diversified, they are all of an earthly stamp. Some seek enjoyment in the riches of the world, some in the honors of the world, and some in the pleasures of the world. But now tell me, my hearers, when did these things ever yet make man or woman happy? If riches could make one happy, I suppose that Haman ought to have been a very happy man; for he was so rich that he could offer king Ahasuerus no less than a thousand talents for the destruction of the Jews. But was Haman happy? You recollect that, on a certain occasion, he called together his friends, and Zeresh, his wife, and told them of all the glory of his riches, and then added: "All these things avail me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai, the Jew, seated at the king's gate!" Here was a worm at the root of his happiness. If military honors could make one happy, I should suppose that Alexander the Great might have been a happy man; but he was not, for we are told he wept because he had not another world to conquer. If sensual gratifications could make one happy, I should think that Colonel Gardiner might certainly have been a happy man; for he was emphatically a man of pleasure, and was even called "The happy rake." But was he happy? O no, for he himself, after his conversion, testi-

fies that once, when he was in the very midst of all the pleasurable indulgences of the world, a dog happening to come into the room, he actually sighed, and said to himself, "O that I were that dog!" Ah! my brethren, believe me, "the world can never give the bliss for which we sigh." And, in truth, we can no more expect to find perfect happiness in the world and the things thereof, than we may expect to find

"Mellow grapes beneath the icy pole!  
Blooming roses on the cheek of death; or  
Substance in a world of unsubstantial shades."

Solomon made a full experiment of the matter, for there was, it seems, no source of earthly enjoyment to which he had not repaired in his pursuit after happiness; and yet in the winding up, he was constrained to say, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Yes, my brethren, it is even so. In the possession of riches, in the possession of honors, in the possession of all the world calls good or great, "the heart, distrustful, asks if this be joy?" But now suppose some man of the world, in this assembly, should rise up and say, "Sir, you are mistaken. I am no Christian; I am a worldling, as you term it, and I am happy, perfectly happy; the angel Gabriel is not happier than I am." No man, I presume, can make such a remark; but if a single one of the human race now upon earth should be able to make such a remark, might we not reply: Be it so; but, sir, how long is this happiness going to last? "The ground of a certain rich man," says the Saviour, "brought forth plentifully; and he thought

within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? and he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods; and I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee."

You see, then, my dear brethren, how the matter stands. No unconverted sinner can at any given period say, I am now happy, perfectly happy! No, no! this happiness is always in prospect. Sometimes it may appear just at hand, but somehow or other it eludes the grasp; and even if the particular object desired be attained, how certain is there to be some disappointment about the matter; and if no disappointment, there is, as we have shown, no certainty of a single day's continuance. How often do laurels wither whilst yet upon the brow; and how often do bubbles burst while we are looking on? At the very time that Nebuchadnezzar considered himself in the plentitude of earthly glory; at the very time that he was walking in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, surveying the magnificence of his capital, and saying in the pride of his heart, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty"—Mark! "While the words were in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven unto him, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee." And so passes away all earthly joy. Such



is the true character of all temporal pleasure, unsatisfying at the best, and transitory at that. O! how can one who has an immortal soul, and bound for eternity, content himself with a thing so unsubstantial and so evanescent? And yet the sinner values it highly; yea, prefers temporal pleasure, such as it is, to eternal happiness. Eternal happiness! What is it? Were I a glorified spirit, I would know it; were I an adoring seraph, I would feel it; but were I a glorified spirit or an adoring seraph, I could never, no, never describe it: for, according to the apostle, "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love him." Eternal happiness! "Beloved," says the apostle, "now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." O, think of the beatific vision of God and the Lamb; think of the sweet society of saints and angels; think of the perpetual exercise of all heavenly affections, the everlasting contemplation of all glorious objects! O think! No sin, no sorrow there! but joy, pure joy, seraphic joy, and joy forever! O, think of the soul of the Christian falling asleep in Jesus; waked up from the bed of death by the music of the skies, and caught up to heaven on angel's wings, it comes into the presence of a smiling God; finds itself within the precincts of eternal day! Glory above, and glory beneath, and glory around, and glory within! The whole soul swimming, as it were, in the pure element of celestial joy. O, think of being in heaven with the blessed Jesus and

his holy angels, and the spirits of the just made perfect, a thousand years! The bare thought of it is enough to make the heart of the believer, even on earth, leap for joy. Only think of being in heaven amid all its glories and its joys a thousand years! And when that thousand years shall have passed away, then another thousand years! and then another! and yet another! Bless the Lord!

“When we’ve been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun;  
We’ve no less days to sing God’s praise  
Than when we first begun.”

What did I say?—Ten thousand years! Let every leaf of the forest stand for ten thousand years of celestial joy; let every dew-drop of the morning stand for ten thousand years of celestial joy; let every star in yonder firmament stand for ten thousand years of celestial joy; add all these together, and even when all these ages heaped on ages shall have passed away, we shall have no less days to sing God’s praise than when we first begun! O! who can measure the millionth part of the height and depth, and length and breadth, of this ocean of eternal happiness—eternal joy! And yet the sinner prefers temporal pleasure, chaffy and transitory as it is, to the whole of it. Only think! he prefers temporal pleasure to eternal happiness! that is, he prefers the rags to the robes, the pebbles to the jewels, the shadow to the substance! Is the sinner a wise man? Men of intellect, judge ye!

But if the folly of the sinner appears in the choice which he makes, it will appear with equal clearness—

II. In the conduct which he pursues. The sinner who,

taken up with the things of time and sense, puts away from him the higher claims of God and his undying soul, does many very foolish things, for example :

First.—He rebels against God his Maker, refusing to submit to his authority, and practically saying by his conduct, who is the Lord, that I should obey him? I know not the Lord, neither will I obey his voice. This is impious, and most foolish too. The sinner rebels against God, his Maker, and what harm has God, his Maker, done him? Was it any harm in God to love the world, and give his Son to die for its redemption? Was it any harm in God to institute the ministry of reconciliation, and send one servant after another to persuade the sinner to ground the weapons of his rebellion, that it might be well with him in the latter end? Was it any harm in God to send his Holy Spirit to move upon his heart to draw him to the foot of the cross, from which spot alone he can ascend to glory? Or was it any harm in God to shower down blessings upon the sinner without number, and keep him alive when he was not prepared to die? And yet the sinner rebels against him! O what ingratitude and what folly! And is there not also madness in this folly? Who is the sinner, and who is God, that the sinner should rebel against his Maker? The sinner, who is he? Is he not an atom of an atom world? And God, who is he? Is he not that great and glorious Being who fills with his presence all immensity? Who is the sinner? Is he not a worm of the dust, and crushed before the moth? And who is God? Is he not that great, omnipotent Being, “who can create and can destroy;” who “can dash whole

worlds to death, and make them when he please"? O think, the sinner is daily and hourly dependent upon God for every mercy, and even for every breath. Yes, it is in God that the sinner "lives and moves, and has his being;" and this God can, in a moment, raise him to heaven and make him an angel of light; or in a moment cast him down to hell, and make him a spirit forever damned. Now these things being so, the smallest particle of common sense one would think sufficient to show that the first and most important thing is to secure the favor of God; for if God be for us, who can be against us? and if God be against us, who can be for us? Now, although this principle is just as clear as the sun in the heavens, or as clear as anything can be, yet the sinner rebels against his Maker; and what is more, continues in this rebellion; yes, obstinately continues in this rebellion, not for days and weeks only, but for many months, many years! And that, too, when this all-powerful and gracious God, by his word, his providence, and his Spirit, is kindly following him, saying, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" and whilst, also, the remarkable words of the apostle are yet sounding in his ears: "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." In spite of all, the sinner rebels against his Maker. Is the sinner a wise man? O no! his conduct, in this matter, is certainly most foolish and unwise; and this is not the only example, for

Second.—The sinner is going to an eternal world, and makes no preparation for that eternal world. If a person



knew that he must go to Oregon, or some other distant country, and there spend the remnant of his life on earth, would it not be right and proper for him to think upon the matter, and make some preparation; especially if, every now and then, he saw a neighbor starting for that country, and knew not but he himself might have to set out the very next day? But suppose, in these circumstances, he should take no interest in the matter, make no inquiries about the soil there, nor the society there, and make no provision for his well-being and comfort there, would not this be very strange? But the sinner is going to that world from whose bourne no traveller returns, and he makes no preparation whatever. And observe, it is quite possible for a person to go to Oregon, or any distant country on earth, and even when no preparation had been made, find himself very comfortably fixed when arrived there; but he who enters the eternal world without preparation must be miserable forever! And yet the sinner makes no preparation. O, what an awful infatuation this is! A certain nobleman, as the story goes, had a rude wit in his employ, called a fool. Amused with a remark of his one day, the nobleman gave him his walking cane, with this injunction: "Take this walking cane, and keep it until you meet with a greater fool than yourself, and then give it to him." The man kept the walking cane for a length of time, not meeting with any one whom he deemed a greater fool than himself. In process of time, however, his lordship was laid upon a dying bed, and sending for the rude wit, addressed him thus: "Farewell!" "Where is your lordship going?" said the man.

"I am going to my long home," replied the nobleman. "Your long home!" rejoined the man, "Your long home! How long is your lordship going to stay there?" "O," said the dying nobleman, "I am never to return!" "Never to return!" exclaimed the man, "never to return!" "No," said the nobleman, "I am going to eternity, and am never to return." "Has your lordship made any preparation for that long home?" "No," said he, "I have not." "Then," replied the man, "your lordship will please to take the walking cane! You are certainly a greater fool than I am; please to take the walking cane." If this be deemed a quaint illustration, sure I am it is forcible, and much to the point. Only think! the sinner is going to an eternal world! In that eternal world there is a heaven of unspeakable and everlasting happiness for those who have made preparation for it; and for those who have made no preparation, there is a world of woe, an awful hell, which must be his dwelling-place for all eternity. And yet the sinner makes no preparation! Regardless of his eternal interests, he is trifling with his undying soul. Is this acting the part of a wise man? Is it not rather acting the part of a madman and a fool? O ye, who, carried away by the things of this world, forget that you have undying souls, that you must soon be in eternity, and must soon be in heaven or in hell, O think about your need of preparation, before the season for it be over and gone for ever! But

A third exhibition of the sinner's folly is this: He is condemned; a pardon is freely offered by the Lord, and he rejects the offered pardon. Now this crowns the

climax of the sinner's folly, and beyond this, I see not how madness and folly can go another step! Were you, my brethren, ever in a court-house? Did you see a man there arraigned on a charge of murder? The judge seated, the jury empannelled, the witnesses giving in their testimony? Were you present when the jury brought in the verdict, Guilty? Were you present when the judge pronounced the sentence of death? O what a moment that was! What breathless silence! What painful sympathy! How was every eye fixed upon the unhappy criminal, upon whom the dreadful sentence of the law had been pronounced! You expected, no doubt, to see him tremble and turn pale. Suppose he cared nothing about the matter; and suppose his counsel should have come to him, and said: "O, my dear client, you are condemned, and, I must confess, righteously condemned; but I can't bear the idea of the sentence of the law being inflicted upon you!—I will obtain a reprieve for you, if I can; I will get up a petition; I will go to the governor; I will leave no stone unturned to obtain a pardon for you." Suppose, I say, in such circumstances, the prisoner at the bar, condemned, should turn upon his heel and reject the kind offer—would not the judge, the jury, the spectators—would not all pronounce him a fool? Only think: the man is condemned to die, and one offers to obtain a pardon for him, and he rejects the kind offer. Surely the man is not in his right mind. Now this is a true picture of the sinner—every feature exact. Is not the sinner found guilty? Is he not condemned? Yes, for the Bible says expressly, "He that believeth not is

condemned already;" aye, and according to John the Baptist, "the wrath of God abideth upon him"—hangs over his head like the stormy cloud, ready to burst at any moment; or, like the axe of the executioner, liable to fall without a moment's warning. Now in these fearful circumstances, the blessed Saviour, the sinner's friend and advocate, comes to him with tenderness and compassion, and says: "O poor sinner, art thou condemned? Yes, righteously; but, sinner, I bring you good news! I am come all the way from heaven to earth to seek and to save that which was lost! I have made the great atoning sacrifice, and now here is a free and full pardon offered to you, through faith in my blood!" Take it, sinner, and your sins shall all be blotted out! Take it, sinner, and you shall have peace with the God that made you! Take it, sinner, and you shall die in peace, and in the world to come heaven shall be your final home—O take it, sinner, your loving, dying Saviour bids you take it. It cost him much; even tears, and groans, and streaming blood, and the painful death of the cross; but, to you, it is offered "without money and without price!" And now, what does the sinner do? Clinging to his lusts, he rejects the offered pardon! He does more than this—he grasps, as it were, the soldier's spear, and thrusts it into the Saviour's side! He treads under foot the blood of the Son of God! "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" Ah! my brethren, whether we consider the sinner's choice, or sinner's conduct, we see that folly, consummate folly, is stamped upon the whole. And now, what is to be the end of these things?



What says our text? "Shame shall be the promotion of fools." O what a poor reward this is; and yet it is all that such folly deserves. As he that sows to the wind can reap nothing better than the whirlwind, so "shame shall be the promotion of fools." There is, if I mistake not, irony as well as truth in the language of our text—"Shame shall be the promotion of fools." The idea is this: Pluming themselves upon their own supposed wisdom, and lightly esteeming the truly pious, they entertain high expectations, and promise themselves great things; but shame, everlasting shame only, must be the result of all the towering and vain expectations with which impenitent sinners here are pleased to deceive themselves. Shame, we have reason to believe, will constitute one very bitter ingredient in the torment of the damned in hell. Daniel has reference to this matter: "Many that sleep in the dust of the earth," says he, "shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

This shame will arise from several sources:

1. From disappointment. Should a soldier be cashiered for cowardice, when he expected promotion for his supposed bravery; should an author be cried down, when he expected great applause; or should a person find that no mention is made of him in a will, when he expected to be one of the principal heirs; in all such cases, disappointment would be a matter of shame. How much more when the sinner wakes up in eternity, and finds all his fond hopes of heaven blasted forever! But shame will arise,

2. From the full development of character which shall then be made. I suppose that the most moral person in this assembly would not have things that he has thought, and said, and done, to be revealed, even to his own domestic circle, for any consideration; and if this disclosure were made, he would be overwhelmed with shame. What, then, will be the amount of that shame which shall come upon the sinner when everything which he has ever thought, and said, and done, shall be revealed, in the presence of God, and angels, and men, in the great judgment-day?

Some years since, a certain man in one of our Atlantic cities was charged with a very base act—was charged with opening a letter which had been put into the post-office, and divulging some family secrets which that letter contained. He denied the charge. A committee was appointed to investigate the charge, and make a report. I was present when the report was made. In the presence of some one or two hundred citizens, the chairman of the committee came forward and said: "We have investigated the charge alleged against the gentleman, and find it to be true." I saw the man the moment his character was thus blasted forever. After one frantic effort with a pistol to take the life of the person who had thus exposed him, he dropped his head; he could not bear to look upon man or woman any more; and returning to his lodgings, he laid himself down upon his bed, and died of a broken heart. Shame killed him. And now, if the divulging of one base act in such an assembly on earth occasioned him such overwhelming, heart-breaking shame,

O! what intolerable shame must come upon the sinner when every base act, when every impure thought, when every unlawful deed shall be revealed, as we have said, before God, and angels, and men! Methinks, in anguish, he will exclaim—"O that I had never had a being!" or, "O that I could now hide me beneath the mountain's base or the ocean's wave!" "Shame shall be the promotion of fools!"

3. A third source of shame will be the manifestation of the sinner's folly. If a person has acted very foolishly, even in common matters, he does not like it to be generally known and talked about; but his consummate folly in relation to spiritual matters must be known and read of all men—aye, and it will be seen and felt by himself, in a manner never seen and felt before. That this matter may be presented more clearly, suppose that this were the judgment-day—trump sounding, dead rising, God descending, angels shouting, devils wailing, earth burning! Suppose all the solemnities and terrors of the judgment-day now before us. The sinner, now stationed upon the left hand, finds himself lost forever. He looks back upon the scenes of this world, and he remembers—(O, he would forget everything if he could, but he cannot—"Son, remember!" said Abraham to the rich man in hell)—yes, whether the sinner choose it or not, he must look back upon the scenes of this world—whether he choose it or not, he will remember—what? Why, the choice which he made, and the conduct which he pursued on earth. For example, he will remember that when on earth he preferred the favor of man to the favor of God! Now he

sees this great God in all his grandeur and his glory; by his almighty arm bearing up heaven, earth, and hell; smiling upon the righteous and frowning upon the wicked; crowning with bliss and glory the one, and pouring wrath and ruin upon the other. And O, to think that when on earth he preferred the favor of that man that rotted in the grave, or is now, perhaps, damned at his side, to the favor of this great and glorious God! O, how will the sinner be sensible of his folly then! How will he cry out, in the anguish of his soul, "O, my folly, my madness when on earth! Of a truth, I preferred the rags to the robes, the pebbles to the jewels, the shadow to the substance. I never knew, O, I never knew that I was such a fool before!" And he will remember—what? Why, that when on earth he preferred the interests of the body to the interests of the soul. By that time he will have seen the body turned over to corruption and the worm, and now he sees the soul in all its capacity for happiness and misery;—he sees the souls of the righteous robed and crowned, rising, and shining, and corruscating in glory unspeakable; and sees the souls of the wicked shrouded in darkness and despair, given over to remorse and anguish which no tongue can tell! When these things are before his eyes, what must be his feelings to remember that when on earth he preferred the interests of that poor dying body, that had to lie down in the grave, to that soul so mighty to sustain an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory, or an exceeding great and eternal weight of sorrow? In this view of the grandeur and capacity of the soul for happiness and misery, will he not cry out:



O, fool! O, madman that I was in yonder world, to think more of my body than of my soul! to prefer the little interests of the one to the mighty interests of the other! Of a truth, I preferred the rags to the robes, the pebbles to the jewels, the shadow to the substance. I never, O, I never knew that I was such a fool before! And there is heaven, too! what a world of glory and of joy! O, heaven, sweet heaven, to me lost forever! And why? Because on earth I bartered it away for the poor, chaffy, short-lived pleasures of time and sense! Where was reason then, and whither had my understanding fled? Why was I so infatuated with the world? O, why did I prefer earth to heaven? Why did I prefer temporal pleasure to eternal happiness? O, my folly, my unspeakable folly! Yes, it is true, it is but too true, I was a fool in yonder world. I preferred the rags to the robes, the pebbles to the jewels, the shadow to the substance! And only to think! I rebelled against that great and glorious God, and although frequently warned, I made no preparation for this awful eternity; and to crown my madness and my folly, although entreated, I refused offered pardon. Ah! yes—

“Yonder sits the slighted Saviour,  
 With the marks of dying love!  
 O that I had sought his favor,  
 When I felt his Spirit move:  
 Golden moments!  
 When I felt his Spirit move!”

4. The fourth and last source of shame which I shall mention is, the company with which the sinner shall be

obliged to associate—not with the virtuous and the good, but with the infamous and the vile. Only think! with murderers, and robbers, and thieves, and drunkards, and liars, and pirates, and gamblers, and hypocrites, and extortioners, and all the mean, and all the vile, and all the abominable that ever lived and ever died! And to crown the whole, he must have his portion with devils damned, and all the foul spirits of the pit! O, to be grouped with such characters! to have no better society than this to all eternity! how overwhelming the thought, and how overwhelming the shame! Cut off from the sweet society of the heavenly world, sinners must be linked with the offscouring of all creation; and, verily, then shall be brought to pass the prediction of the Saviour, “There shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth,” when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves cast out! O my soul! there must be mourning—mourning, at the judgment-seat of Christ. Parents and children there must part; must part to meet no more. Husbands and wives there must part; must part to meet no more. Brothers and sisters, companions and friends, there must part; must part to meet no more. O, who can bear the idea of being excluded from the dwellings of the blessed, cut off from the society of those whom we loved on earth, and cast down to hell, there to associate with murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers; with robbers, and liars, and thieves, and swindlers, and pirates, and drunkards; and, as we said, with all the mean, and all the vile, and all the abominable!

And how will it add to the sinner's anguish to think that by his continuance in sin he had made himself unfit for a better society and a better place! and how will conscience, too, torment the sinner's soul, thundering in his ear the charge which he cannot deny—"Ye knew your duty and did it not." O yes, the sinner will be constrained to say: "I knew what was right, yet did what was wrong. O my folly, my madness on earth! and now I wake up to the full conviction of my folly and my madness, when it can avail me nothing. O it is too late now! The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and my poor soul is not saved. O that I could return to the earth once more! O that I could live my life over again! O that I had one hour more to seek salvation in! and if this cannot be, O that I had never been born! or, O that I had slumbered forever in my grave!"

My dear unconverted friends, think, O think upon these things! A want of thought has ruined many—let it not ruin you. O, come now, and let the subject matter of our discourse bear upon your own case. What is the choice which you have made, and what is the course of conduct which you have pursued? Have you chosen the favor of man in preference to the favor of God? and is this not a foolish choice? Then make this choice no more. From this moment seek the favor of God as the object of chief desire. Have you not set a greater value upon the interests of the body than upon the interests of the soul? and have you not chosen temporal pleasure in preference to eternal happiness? O, be persuaded to do this no more, lest your precious souls be cut off from heaven, and you

have none to blame but yourselves! Have you rebelled against your Maker? was this right? Have you neglected to make preparation for another and eternal world? would you approve of this if now laid upon a dying bed?—and have you rejected offered pardon? O, think what that pardon will be worth in that day which shall disclose “a God in grandeur, and a world on fire!” Come, my impenitent friends, O listen to my voice—O attend to my counsel; or rather, listen to the voice, and attend to the counsel of Him who is your Maker, and who will soon sit in judgment upon your souls. Thus saith the Lord of hosts: “Consider your ways: Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: Call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.”

“While God invites, how blest the day,  
How sweet the gospel’s charming sound!  
Come, sinners, haste—O haste away,  
While yet a pardoning God he’s found.”



## SERMON VII.

## THE DELUGE.

And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark.

GEN. vii. 1.

THE five books of Moses were written more than three thousand years ago, and are supposed to be the most ancient records now upon earth. They give a view of patriarchal times, and carry up the history of the world to its very creation; indeed, the history opens with an account of the wonder working power of God exerted upon "the void immense," bringing into existence the heavens and the earth, with all their rich and varied furniture. When the mighty work was done, it was all pronounced very good. Everything was beautiful; everything was perfect. The whole presented one unbroken scene of beauty and enchantment. It was the morning of creation, and most lovely was the morning! But, alas! too soon there was a sad change; for man, originally made in the moral image of his Maker, sinned! This withered everything beautiful upon earth; this

"Brought death into the world, and all our woe."

From the first moment of man's apostasy, the blighting influence of sin began to pass over the face of this fair creation, and its direful effects were seen and felt in various modes and forms; chiefly in the deep depravity of human

nature, and in certain awful manifestations of the Divine displeasure against sinning man.

With regard to human depravity, consequent upon the fall, it is remarkable, that the first man ever born into the world proved a murderer, and the second was the person murdered. This was a sad beginning; and it seemed to portend most terrible and disastrous things in time to come. It is true that, at the birth of Enos, the grandson of Adam, there was a brightening of the prospect; "For," says the historian, "then began men to call upon the name of the Lord;" but, alas! it was only as the beaming of light in a dark day; it soon passed away, and was succeeded by a deeper gloom than ever. Yes, for not very long after that period, according to the Scriptures, man became exceedingly corrupt. Iniquity began to abound in a most frightful manner. The earth was filled with violence. "And God saw," says the historian, "that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil, continually. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth; both man and beast. But," continues the historian, "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Here is one faithful Abdiel amid legions of apostate spirits—one righteous Noah standing alone in his righteousness, in the midst of a world lying in wickedness. But, although solitary and alone, he was not overlooked. "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord—and the Lord said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence. Make thee an ark—and behold I, even I,

do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and everything that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee. And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female."

Never, my brethren, was there a more awful communication made from heaven to earth than this; and never, it seems, was any divine command more promptly obeyed. "For," says an apostle, "by faith, Noah being warned of God, of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." Many things might have tempted him to demur. The work was great. The ark which he was required to construct was to be three hundred cubits in length, fifty cubits in breadth, and thirty in height; or, according to our measure, about five hundred feet long, eighty broad, and fifty high—a most gigantic structure. I have calculated the tonnage, and find it equal to that of some twenty merchant ships of the largest class at the present time. The greatness of the work then might have caused him to hesitate in entering upon it. And another thing was this: Noah must have known very well, that in entering upon a work of this kind, so strange and unprecedented, he would not certainly subject himself to derision and contempt—would become the song of the drunkard, the butt of ridicule with many, and by all would be esteemed as a dreaming enthusiast, a fool, and a madman; but none of these things

moved him. He had heard the voice of God, and faith was triumphant. He staggered at nothing. He verily believed that it would be even as God had said; and, therefore, according to all that the Lord had commanded him, so did he. And now, with zeal and determination, he enters upon this work—this strange work. The foundation of the ark is laid; the gigantic structure rises; and, as the work goes on, he warns the world of the ungodly of an approaching deluge, and calls upon them to repent and turn from their sins; but his words seem to them as idle tales, which they believe not, and therefore his calls to repentance are disregarded. Their curiosity, however, is excited, and gathering around the ark in crowds, they affect to wonder what the good man means. “He says there is going to be a flood! a flood to drown the whole world! Nonsense! Who ever heard of such a thing? Methuselah, that old man who died the other day, lived nine hundred and sixty and nine years—he never saw or heard of such a thing. A flood to drown the world! It is all nonsense! Where can so much water come from? All perfect nonsense! Poor old man! Surely, he has been dreaming, and his head is turned!” Thus, methinks, the unbelieving multitude derided the man of God, and made a mock of the whole affair! The hireling workmen, too, methinks, made themselves merry at Noah’s expense; especially when, the shades of the evening being come, they left their work, and with their boon companions, merry over their cups, they would talk about the scenes of the day gone by. O what jesting and what merriment then! Methinks they would tell how serious



and sad the old man looked; how, ever and anon, he would break out in the language of warning; and when he saw that they made light of it, how he would burst into tears, and weep aloud in the presence of them all! "Well, to be sure, it looks a little droll; but it is all nonsense—a dream, perhaps—some strange, foolish dream; but it happens very well for us, for the job is a good one, and the dreamer is good pay!" My brethren, I do not think that I have over-colored the picture. No doubt such remarks were made, and many such trials Noah was called upon to endure. But he swerved not, but urged on the work, day after day; and as the time appointed drew on, methinks his warnings were yet more frequent and more loud.

And now, the ark is finished; the antediluvians have filled up the measure of their iniquity; the patience of God is exhausted, and the day of vengeance is just at hand

But, as yet, all is calm and serene. There is nothing alarming in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. The shining sun, the azure sky, and the gentle breeze, present nothing portentous. The events now coming, tremendous as they are, cast no shadows before them. Everything is going on in the usual way; the beasts of the earth are roaming in the forest; the birds of the air are flying in the heavens, and the fish of the sea are sporting in the deep; still is heard the lowing of the oxen, the bleating of the sheep, and the music of the groves. The hum of industry too is heard on every hand, and the voice of jesting, and the voice of mirth, and the shout of the merry-hearted. They are buy-

ing and they are selling, they are planting and they are building, they are marrying and they are giving in marriage. I repeat it, there is nothing strange or alarming in heaven above, in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth, but everything going on in the usual way. And now, in the very midst of this scene of universal and deep security, the voice of God is heard! "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark." The command is given, faith is again triumphant, and Noah leads his family into the ark. Yes, in the view of a wondering crowd, this one righteous man leaves his dwelling, and with all his family following, he enters into the ark. And now, methinks, mirth and merriment are at their height; jesting and ridicule are on every hand. "Well done! the old dreamer is gone into his ark, sure enough. Who ever thought he would carry the matter so far? Poor old man! now we know that he has been dreaming, and his head is turned, for we see no sign of a flood yet; and if he waits there until it comes, he will wait long enough, and if he never dies till this mighty deluge comes, he will live a little longer than Methuselah, we think!" But in the midst of their mirth and jesting, suddenly, methinks, their faces turn pale. They tremble and exclaim, "Merciful God! what is this! The fowls of heaven are flying to the ark, and birds of every wing! And see, too, the beasts of the earth are coming from the forest in every direction! And only look upon the ground, how it is covered with creeping insects, and reptiles of every kind, all moving toward the ark, as if led on by some invisible hand, or some strange instinct—ominous

of some coming evil. O! what can this be?" And now the mockers are held in check, and some are almost ready to rush to the ark and beg Noah to let them in; but it is too late now, for Noah and his family having entered in, and beasts, and birds, and creeping things, two of every kind, as the Lord commanded—Noah ceases to warn; the door of the ark is closed, and the doom of an incorrigible world is sealed forever! And now there are strange, unprecedented sights, and voices inspiring terror. God frowns, and all nature trembles at the frown of its Maker. The elements begin to jar, the sun is darkened; the earth begins to reel and stagger like a drunken man; the waters are troubled, there is a rumbling in the deep—flying clouds are seen; they pass swiftly over the face of the sky—darker clouds are rising, east, west, north, south; and who ever saw clouds so frowning and so dark! and what flashes of lightning, and what mighty thunderings are these! And now the winds of heaven are let loose; they roar, and sweep tremendously over the earth; the rain descends in torrents, the storm rages more and more; the fountains of the great deep are broken up, and the windows of heaven are opened; and floods from beneath, and floods from above, mingling their waters, enlarge the dominions of the deep. The ark is afloat, and the rolling billows dash upon its sides, and bear it along in safety and in triumph. The storm increases, its violence is most terrific; there is one unbroken sheet of lightning, and mighty thunders upon mighty thunders rock the globe; amid jarring and roaring elements, heaven and earth seem mingling together as if the last great day were

come. The flood increases! old ocean's barriers exist no more! And where are the mockers and the jesters now? None are seen; for fear, now, is in every bosom; and in every face dismay. The cry of agony is heard; it comes from every quarter, and the wild shriek of despair mingles with the howlings of the storm. The terrified multitudes, in wild alarm, rush from place to place seeking refuge, and finding none. O, how children cling to their parents, and wives to their husbands, and friend to friend, all crying for help, but crying in vain! Some hasten to the tops of their houses, but find no refuge there! Some plunge into the flood, and swimming around the ark, beg Noah to take them in; but the door of the ark is not opened, and they struggle, and sink to rise no more! Some rush to the hills, but all in vain, for the highest hills are covered, and they are swept away! Some climb the trees of the forest; but O, the swelling waters rise higher than the tallest trees, and they too, are swept away. And now see the few that still survive—they are climbing the sides of the mountains, the flood pursues them; they seek safety on the tops of the highest cliffs;—but O, the relentless flood! it rises higher and higher still! And now the billows pass over the mountain tops, and the last remnants of the human race shriek, sink down, and are buried in the waters of the mighty deep! All is still now!—all save the dashing of the billows and the bellowing of the storm; and nought is seen on any hand, but one wide, boundless ocean, with its mighty billows tumbling round the globe. Yes, one thing more is seen—the ark! Noah's ark!—yonder it is seen, riding in triumph upon the bosom



of the troubled deep, amid floating carcasses, and the wreck of a ruined world.

There are some important remarks which I wish to make, bearing upon the subject before us. My first remark has reference to the deluge as a matter of fact; and of this there can be no reasonable doubt, for the evidences thereof are found, not only in this volume, and in the traditions of almost all the nations of antiquity, but they are found inscribed upon the very face of the earth, even up to the present time. Marine shells, in immense banks, are now seen in Georgia, and in many other regions, in places remote from the ocean; and some years ago the skeleton of a whale was found embedded in the earth near the summit of one of the loftiest mountains in Asia. Denying the fact of the deluge, how can these things be accounted for? In boring the earth in numerous places, logs have been found buried forty, fifty, and even sixty feet below the surface. If there have been no overflowings and mighty stirring up of the waters, how can we account for so much sediment, or alluvial soil? Moreover, in the prairies of the south-west, lone rocks are found where no quarry exists; these rocks are of the same nature as those found in the Green Mountains of Vermont; and if torn from those mountains, and rolled so far, how violent and mighty must have been the current which detached these rocks from the mountains, and bore them with such fury on! But some have said, the story of Noah's flood is all nonsense—a perfect fable. There could be no such thing. And why? There is not enough water in the atmosphere and connected with the surface

of the globe, to submerge it in water. This has not been proved; but suppose it were so, who can tell whether there may not be vast reservoirs of water in the centre of the earth, which by some chemical action might have been thrown upon the surface? And this idea seems to be sanctioned by the Psalmist, when, speaking of the creation of the earth, he says, "Thou hast founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." Moreover, the idea falls in most remarkably with these words of Moses: "The fountains of the great deep were broken up." But suppose it be ascertained that there are no such reservoirs of water in the heart of the earth—how easy would it have been for Him who originally "stretched the north over the empty place, and hung the earth upon nothing"—I say, how easy would it have been for Him to change the polarity of the globe. This done, the natural consequence would be, the emptying of the waters of the ocean upon the land. This would account for all the facts which we have stated; and it is a remarkable circumstance, and strongly corroborating this position, that the desert of Sahara appears evidently to have been the ocean's bed. But we need say nothing more on this point, for within my own recollection, the enemies of the Bible have changed their notes, and those who were wont to say that Noah's deluge was a fable, now admit it to be a fact—certain geological discoveries made within twenty years past, having placed the matter beyond all reasonable doubt.

The second remark touching the deluge has reference to its cause. And here we are not left to conjecture, for

the Scriptures are perfectly clear upon this point. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth; and therefore the Lord said unto Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me. Make thee an ark, and behold I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven." Observe, my brethren, it was sin that occasioned the deluge. What a dreadful evil then must sin be! Some persons look upon sin as a light and venial affair. They have been indulging in it, for, lo! these many years, and have little concern about the matter. O, could they see it as it appears in the sight of a holy God, methinks they would tremble and cry out with the Jerusalem convicted sinners, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" It is supposed that there were as many persons in the time of the flood as there are at the present time, say eight hundred millions; and if so, what a fearful comment upon the evil of sin. Eight hundred millions of human beings swallowed up in one wide, yawning, terrific, watery grave! O, methinks the flashing of the lightning, and the pealing of the thunder—the roaring of the storm, and the dashing of the waters—all, all united to send the notes of warning far and wide. Stand in awe, and sin not. O, sinner, remember you have sinned against the same God that those, in the days of Noah, sinned against; and be sure your sin will find you out; for you and God must meet. And whether you choose it or not, you must give account for all the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or

bad; and how dreadful will it be for you, if you be not prepared for the reckoning!

But this leads to a third remark. The deluge may be considered a type of the judgment of the great day; and the scenes then presented, as typical of the scenes which will be spread before the eyes of all when God shall, in the winding up of all human events, come with his chariots like a whirlwind to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire. If the deluge was a tremendous affair, the day of judgment will be more tremendous still. When God destroyed the world by the waters of the deluge, he came to reckon with the sinners of only one generation; but when he shall come, in the day of final judgment, he will come to reckon with the sinners of every generation. Hence, in reference to it, it is said, "The great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?"

"Day of judgment! day of wonders!

Hark! the trumpet's awful sound!

Louder than a thousand thunders,

Shakes the vast creation round!"

O, what scenes of terror will then be presented! When the deluge came, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened; and the rains descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and one vast and mighty tornado was upon the face of the whole earth, striking with consternation all the millions doomed to perish! But O, how much more terrible will be the scenes of the judgment! "Great day of God Almighty and of the Lamb!"



“Whence comes that darkness? Whence those yells of woe?

What thunderings are these which shake the world?

Why fall the lamps from heaven as blasted figs?

Why tremble righteous men? Why angels pale?

God comes! God in his car of vengeance comes!

Hark! Louder on the blast come hollow shrieks

Of dissolution! In the fitful scowl

Of night, near and more near angels of death

Incessant flap their deadly wings, and roar

Through all the fervid air! The mountains rock!

The moon is sick! Stars, cease your dancing now,

Your graves are dug among the dismal clouds,

And angels are assembling round your bier.”

“And I saw,” says the apostle John, “a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every man according to their works.” Nothing can be more terribly sublime than this description. Notice—“And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heavens fled away; and there was found no place for them.” Here is the appearing of the final Judge, and, as an effect, the vanishing away of the heavens and the earth! As the sun, rising in peerless brightness, throws its splendors

upon the world slumbering in darkness, and with its effulgence chases away the shades of night and the mists of the morning; even so, at the coming of the final Judge, the heavens and the earth, substantial as they are, shall be only as the shades of the night and the mists of the morning. Smitten by the living and insufferable effulgence of his glory, they shall vanish away as the shades of the night and the mists of the morning! And what, poor sinner, will then become of thee? Ah, my brethren, believe me, the day of judgment will come. It is no fiction; it is a great Bible truth. The day of judgment will come, and you and I must witness all its dread solemnities! Aye, and then that sentence shall be pronounced upon us, which will place us in heaven or in hell! which will number us with angels of light or spirits damned! and, O, remember this sentence admits of no reversal; it will be registered in the archives of heaven, and registered for eternity! Woe! woe! woe! to those not prepared for the judgment! It would have been better for them had they never been born!

My fourth remark is this:—Noah's ark may be considered as a type of Christ. One was of divine appointment, and so is the other. The one was the only refuge—the only means of safety, and so is the other. All who were not in the ark perished, and out of Christ assuredly there is no salvation. "There is salvation in none other," says Peter. "Other foundation," says Paul, "can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And what says John the Baptist? "He that believeth on the Son has everlasting life; but he that believeth not the

Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

According to Scriptures, God is, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; but out of Christ, God is a consuming fire. O, my brethren, believe me, the judgment is coming! the day of wrath is drawing nigh, and verily "None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good." Let it sink down in the ears of all, and never be forgotten, that when God arises to judgment, Christ, our blessed Saviour, is the sinner's only hope and only refuge; for then the arrows of vengeance shall fly on every hand, and strike every spot not protected by the shield of a Saviour's righteousness.

When the deluge came, those not in the ark were, no doubt, filled with strange alarm, and in their terror sought refuge, some in one place and some in another. Doubtless some ascended the tops of their houses, but found no safety there! Some climbed the trees of the forest, some the lofty hills, and some the towering mountains, and some, too, swam around the ark, but all in vain! *Within* the ark was peace, within was safety; but *without* was wrath and ruin, desolation and death. So sinners may seek safety—some in one thing and some in another: one relying upon his own righteousness, and another upon the intercession of the saints—one upon his prayers and tears, another upon his numerous and splendid charities—but all in vain! Absolutely, Christ is the sinner's only refuge—the sinner's only hope. In Christ the sinner is safe and happy; without Christ, lost to all eternity.

And now, these things being so, permit me to make a spiritual and practical application of the subject:—"And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark." If there be an unconverted father present, to him I would now address myself with earnestness and affection. O, thou, who art the head of your family—thou upon whose arm leans an affectionate wife, and around whom cluster beloved sons and daughters—come into the ark! You ought to have come a long time ago, for, no doubt, since you have had a family, you have received many calls and many warnings. Where is that beloved Joseph? that dear little Benjamin? that idol of your affection? Alas! torn from your fond embrace by the relentless hand of death, that loved one now sleeps in the grave! And was not that providence which made this sad breach in your family a loud call? And perhaps another was taken, and yet another! But it may be you have had a call of another kind. Some of your household have been brought into the fold of Christ. What! shall the child be brought in and the parent left out? As the head of your family, it was your duty to "allure to brighter worlds and lead the way." And shall you linger whilst your own children are pressing in? O, come into the ark! For your own sake, come in, for verily the responsibility of a parent is great, and most fearful must be the reckoning in the day of judgment for those heads of families who have neglected to train up their children in the way in which they should go. I knew an unconverted daughter once, who, dying in despair, reproached her parents upon her bed of death for neglecting her pre-



cious soul. "O my father and my mother," said she, "you brought me up to nothing." O, how terrible is the thought of sons and daughters in the world laying the blame of their damnation upon their ungodly parents! O, venerated father, listen to me. O thou, who art the head of your family, and king of your household—I repeat it—thou upon whose arm leans an affectionate wife, and around whom cluster sons and daughters, who respect and love you, come into the ark;—come, even if not for your own sake, yet for the sake of those who are bone of your bone, and flesh of your flesh. The influence of parents upon their children, whether they desire it or not, is very great. If parents are prayerless and worldly-minded, children are likely to be prayerless and worldly-minded too; and if they neglect the Bible and the ordinances of God's house, their children are likely to do the same.

I recollect the case of a young man whose father was an unconverted man, when I urged him to attend to the great concern. "Sir," said he, "it is not worth while to speak to me on that subject; my father is not a Christian, and I don't care about being a better man than my father." Ah me!—those children whose parents are not pious are truly to be pitied, for their prospects for heaven are dark indeed. Some years since, the assertion having been made that the children of the pious were no better than others, an investigation was made; and the families within a certain district having been divided into three classes—those in which both parents were professedly pious, those in which only one parent was a pro-

fessor, and those in which neither parent made any pretensions to religion—it was ascertained that of the children over ten years of age, in the first class, two-thirds were hopefully pious; in the second class, about one-third; and in the third class, not more than one-twelfth. In comparing the first and third classes, it was found that, of one hundred and twenty-five children of the first class, where both parents professed religion, eighty-four were members of some church; whilst, of one hundred and ninety-nine children of the third class, in which neither parent professed religion, only fourteen were connected with any church. This speaks volumes, and makes a most powerful appeal to parents on the score of their responsibility. O, if the venerated father who has all along neglected the great salvation, should now, at last, make a move toward the cross of Christ—should come out, and take his stand openly upon the Lord's side, what a powerful, what a thrilling effect it would have upon all the members of the family! The beloved parent setting out for heaven, the children are not willing to be left behind. O, then, thou respected and most responsible head of the family, come into the ark! Yes, come, and come not alone; bring your wife along with you. What! are you willing to be separated from your bosom companion, and separated forever? Surely you cannot bear the thought—then persuade her to come along with you. And will you not bring your sons also with you? are they not all dear to your heart? and which will you consent to leave out? the eldest or the youngest? shall it be Reuben, the beginning of your

strength, or Benjamin, the son of your old age? And your daughters, too, will you not prevail upon them also to come in? they love you much; cast your eye over their sweet faces, and say which one are you willing to see go down into the pit. Is it the one that is married, or the one that is at home? is it Márgaret, or is it Louisa? is it Mary, or your dear little Susan? O, leave none out—bring them all into the ark! Noah led all his household into the ark. Why should you not do the same? O, how happy to have a family united on earth, and unbroken in heaven! I recollect seeing once the picture of a resurrection scene. The graves were opening—the dead arising; there was one lovely group—a family—a whole family! father, mother, sons and daughters, all radiant and happy, ascending to the skies together. Once more then, I say to thee, venerated parent, as the Lord said unto Noah, “Come thou, and all thy house, into the ark.” Come, this day. O, should you now make a move, how would it rouse those around you, and especially your own sons and daughters. Young man, young maiden, am I wrong? Should that dear and venerated father of yours come out, and confess Christ before the world, would you be indifferent to your own soul’s salvation? Here, then, beloved parent, is a powerful appeal to the best feelings of your nature; here is a strong motive, a double motive, nay, a motive multiplied according to the number of your children. O come then; “come thou, and all thy house, into the ark.”

But perhaps the parents are already in the ark, and the children are not, or at least some of them. O, ye

children of pious parents—ye children of the covenant—you upon whom baptismal water has been poured—your parents are in the ark; why linger you without? Your parents are going to heaven—why should you not go along with them? Are you willing to be separated in the great day? How can you bear the thought of seeing them on the right hand of the Judge, whilst you are placed on the left? Of seeing them rising and shining with angels in glory, whilst you are sinking down deeper and deeper in the dark realms of wo! O, it seems to me that if the children of the pious go down to hell, they will have no common damnation. Their peculiar advantages, and then that terrible separation, will add much to their pangs, and the fearfulness of their doom. Only think! suppose one of Noah's sons, when invited by his father, had refused to go with him into the ark—what would have been his feelings when the deluge came? Whilst filled with alarm, and crying out in terror, amid the dashing of the billows and the roaring of the storm, would he not have looked toward the ark in special agony, and exclaimed: "Yonder is the ark, safe upon the bosom of the troubled deep! My father is there, my mother is there, my brothers are there—all, all in safety there—and I am lost! I too was invited, yea, urged to enter in with them; why did I not? O my folly! my madness! I have brought this evil upon myself! Why did I not enter in? Why did I not enter in? It is too late now! O, it is too late now!"

My dear young friends—ye children of the covenant—ye who are so tenderly beloved, for whom so many



prayers have been offered, and over whom so many tears have been shed, O, be persuaded to come into the ark! In the great and dreadful day of judgment you will need a Saviour; O, embrace him now! Cast in your lot with your pious friends, and with them be safe and happy now and for evermore.

May the God of heaven touch your heart, and incline you to do that which you will wish you had done in that day which shall disclose "a God in grandeur and a world on fire."



## SERMON VIII.

### WAR IN HEAVEN.

And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven.—REV. xii. 7, 8.

THE visions of John in the Isle of Patmos are, in general, mysterious and sublime. But, although their mystical and prophetic import may not be fully understood, they may, nevertheless, suggest many useful and awakening thoughts. The passage at present under consideration is not entirely free from difficulty; and commentators have different views of the subject. Some suppose that by the dragon, we are to understand the Pagan Roman Empire; by Michael, the Christian Roman Empire; by Heaven, the throne of the Roman Emperors; and by the war in heaven is meant the different and opposite counsels of

Pagan and Christian Roman Emperors. Without attempting to settle the mystical or prophetic import of the passage, I wish, at this time, to consider it as pointing to an event which literally took place in heaven; an event most memorable indeed; which has awakened the attention of the universe, changed the face of creation, and has been productive of most direful consequences to angels and to men: I mean the fall of rebel angels in heaven.

My brethren, God is the Creator and Sovereign of the universe. Millions of worlds roll around his throne, and no doubt all are inhabited by intelligent creatures. Of these intelligent beings, only two orders are known to us—angels and men; both, originally pure and upright, were, according to the Scriptures, placed in a state of probation, and made free to stand, yet liable to fall. The angels were first created. They were a superior order, and were to stand or fall, each for himself. Man, to stand or fall in his federal head. Some of the angels, called elect, kept their first estate, and were confirmed in a state of purity and happiness; others, according to the Scriptures, kept not their first estate. They sinned and fell. What their sin was we know not, for the Bible has not revealed it. It is no matter. Suffice it for us to know that they sinned. That moment the golden chain of love which bound them to the throne of God was broken forever! They assumed the character of sinners; of rebels against the Divine Majesty. What daring acts of opposition they attempted, we know not; but there is reason to believe, that as they presumed to rebel against their Maker, so they also

presumed, openly and positively, to resist his high authority. And, doubtless, God made use of some instruments in punishing them. This would be in perfect harmony with his general dealings in punishing sin; for when he would root out the Canaanites for their impieties, he sent against them Joshua and the tribes of Israel; and when he would punish the Jews for their rejection of the Messiah, he raised up against them Titus and the Roman army. Angels, too, we find, have been employed in services of a similar kind. It was an angel, you recollect, that in one gloomy, disastrous night, slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt. And was it not an angel, also, who entered the camp of Sennacherib, and in one night laid low in death one hundred and eighty-five thousand men before the walls of Jerusalem? Why then may we not suppose, that when the apostate spirits were driven from heaven, it was done by holy angels, led on by Michael the archangel? So that, literally, "There was war in heaven; Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." My brethren, think me not fanciful. I have not selected this text as the groundwork of any vain speculations. I have no wish to amuse you with any conceits or imaginations of my own. The subject, I trust, you will find to be one of deep and solemn interest, and of great practical importance. I confess I like the subject, because it serves to present vividly, and in a new aspect, some great truths which are too little thought upon. We wish now—

I. To consider the character of the war of rebel angels in heaven; and

II. To compare and contrast it with the war of rebel men on earth.

I. The character of the war of rebel angels in heaven. It has several features, as we may gather from various parts of the sacred Scriptures.

First. It was wilful; I mean they brought it upon themselves. Certainly they came from the hands of their Creator pure and happy, and if originally placed in a state of probation, as the Bible clearly gives us to understand, then of course they must have been free agents.

“Not free, what proof could they have given sincere  
Of true allegiance, constant faith and love,  
When what they needs must do, appeared  
Not what they would. What praise could they receive,  
What pleasure, God, from such obedience paid?  
When will and reason, of freedom both despoiled,  
Made passive both, had served Necessity,  
Not God. They therefore as to right belonged,  
So were created.”

We dare not say that, subsequently, God exerted any positive influence upon their will, inclining them to sin. This would be an impeachment of the goodness of God, as though he took pleasure in the misery of his creatures. It would impugn his wisdom, as though he knew not, at first, how properly to create these angels; nay, more, it would arraign his justice, for had he done it, he would have destroyed their free agency—he would have changed their original constitution; and, in fact, would have been



the author of their sin? No, no! they were made, strictly speaking, free agents, and so they continued until their fall. But mark! if free agents, of course, whilst free to stand, yet liable to fall. They fell! God was not the author of their fall. No, but as one well expresses it—they fell “self-tempted, self-depraved.”

“They themselves decreed  
Their own revolt: not God. If he foreknew,  
Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,  
Which had proved no less certain, unforeknown;  
So, without least impulse or shadow of fate,  
Or aught by him, immutably foreseen,  
They trespassed.”

This view of the matter falls in precisely with the language of the Bible; for it tells us that the angels sinned, that they kept not their first estate, but left their habitations; all of which phrases evidently imply a voluntary, wilful act of their own. But this wilful apostasy on the part of rebel angels was the procuring cause of their expulsion, or the war in heaven; therefore, on the part of these once exalted, now fallen spirits, it was a wilful war.

Secondly. It was an irreconcilable war—and that, both on the part of God, and with regard to rebel angels also.

1. It is irreconcilable on the part of God. Let us for a moment look at the state of the case. God is the alone Monarch of all worlds. The whole creation is his empire, and all intelligent creatures the rightful subjects of his moral government. Now, it is a matter of the last importance that the honors of the divine government be

maintained, and that no attribute of God, and no law which he has framed for the well-being of his creatures, should be trampled upon; and if trampled upon, not only does the justice and the honor of God, but the tranquillity and well-being of all worlds, require that this act, so sinful and dangerous, should not be permitted to pass with impunity. Now, when angels sinned, they insulted the Divine Majesty; violated the laws framed for the well-being of creation, and therefore endangered the happiness of all worlds. This act must not be permitted to pass unpunished. Ah! my brethren, if we could only understand the full malignity of sin—if we could only understand the great dishonor it brings upon God, and the direful consequences it would produce throughout all worlds if permitted to pass with impunity, we would immediately perceive that, without some effectual plan devised to satisfy the law and justice of God, God could never be reconciled to sinning angels. According to the Scriptures, no plan has ever been devised, nor ever will be; hence, the fire prepared for the devil and his angels is an everlasting fire. Moreover,

2. This war is irreconcilable on the part of rebel angels also, for when they sinned, that moment their natures were changed. Their moral powers were broken, and their very spirits poisoned. Love, once triumphant, was succeeded by hatred, deadly and eternal hatred. The passions of the soul, and the affections of the heart, which once so sweetly harmonized, were thrown into disorder and became as jarring elements, or as the troubled sea that cannot rest. According to sacred Scriptures,

fallen angels have no tender feelings—no relenting thoughts. All is malignant rancour, and therefore,

“Never can true reconciliation grow  
Where wounds of deadly hate have pierced so deep;  
Which would but lead them to a relapse,  
And heavier fall.”

To this hour Satan, or, as he is here termed, the dragon, and his angels, are as much opposed to their Maker as they ever were. And what though we cannot see them “hurling defiance to the vault of heaven,” nor hear them blaspheming the God of heaven, because of their pains, yet the proof thereof is seen in the faded beauties of this once fair creation, and heard in the groans of the sick and the dying. Satan, vanquished on the plains of heaven, has, so to speak, shifted the scene of warfare. Raging with malice, he has come down to earth, here to continue his impious struggle against the Most High. Long has he been striving to blast the works of God, and, alas! how has he succeeded in robbing man of his primeval innocence, and in converting a blooming Eden into a vale of tears and field of blood! Ever since the fall of man, as we learn from the sacred volume, this enemy of God and man has been going about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Rapid as lightning, and insatiable as death, he stops at nothing. Lowering clouds of wrath alarm him not. Quenchless fires of vengeance impede him not. It is his purpose, if he can, to defeat the counsels of his Maker, and send the ploughshare of ruin over all the works of God. Having succeeded in tempting ~~our~~ first parents, he presumed to

tempt the Messiah himself, God's Eternal Son! Signally defeated by him, he still continues to stir up war against the remnant of his seed. This is no fiction. You recollect the language of our Saviour—"Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have thee, that he might sift thee as wheat:" and the apostle John, in reference to the period immediately preceding the millennium, says:—"And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." And again this voice is uttered in heaven: "Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Rev. xii. 10, 12. Hence it appears that Satan and his angels continue their opposition to their Maker, and will continue it until the winding up of all human events; when, as we are expressly told, he shall be cast into the bottomless pit, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night forever. The war, then, is absolutely irreconcilable.

3. It is an unreasonable war—on the part of rebel angels a most unreasonable war. It must be, for God, as an infinitely wise and good Being, could have given no just cause or occasion. The Bible tells us that God is love. This is indeed his memorial from all generations, even from all eternity; and even fallen angels cannot deny it—and why? God was such to them until they sinned. Yes, he brought them from the womb of non-existence.



He crowned them with glory and honor; placed them near his throne, and made them as happy as their natures would admit of; and yet, they kept not their first habitation—they rebelled!

“Ah, wherefore? He deserved no such return  
From them, whom he created what they were,  
In that bright eminence; and with his good  
Upbraided none! Nor was his service hard;  
What could be less, than pay Him thanks?  
How due!”

Why, then, did they rebel? Was there anything in the *character* of God which they could impeach? Certainly not, for it was absolutely perfect. Was there anything in his *government* which they could condemn? By no means; for it is founded on the principles of infinite wisdom and eternal rectitude. Well, was there anything in their *own circumstances* which could reasonably create discontent? O no, for they were in heaven, and their cup of bliss was overflowing. Why then did they rebel? Although we know what tempted them, yet, in the very nature of the case, it is evident that the war which they waged against their Maker was without cause, and therefore unreasonable. It was a war of ingratitude, of folly, of madness;—was a war against duty, against interest, against happiness itself: a war, in short, for which not only the justice of God must forever condemn them, but the voice of reason, and the voice of the whole intelligent creation. Certainly, then, it was an unreasonable war.

Lastly: It was to rebel angels a most fatal and disastrous war. They gained nothing, but lost much. 1. They

lost the favor of God, even that favor which is life, and that loving-kindness which is better than life. This they once enjoyed in plenitude and perfection; but now it is lost forever! Never more shall they be permitted to come into the peaceful presence of their Maker! Never more share in the light of his countenance, or any tokens of his love! Nay more; having forfeited his favor, they must endure his withering frowns forever! 2. They lost their own moral loveliness. Once, in the image of God, they were pure and lovely indeed! Every celestial virtue, every heavenly grace was upon them. They were fairer than the roses of Paradise, lovelier than the stars of the morning. But, alas! when they sinned, all was changed. No longer innocent, they became hateful; no longer the sons of God, they became demons of the pit. 3. They lost, moreover, their seats in heaven! O those sweet, those happy fields, where joy forever reigns! To rebel angels they are lost forever! Their seats are vacant now; their harps are thrown away, and "their place shall be found no more in heaven!" No more shall they mingle with the blessed; nor sweep their melodious strings; nor chant their heavenly songs. No more shall they climb the heights of bliss; nor range the fields of glory; nor dwell in the sweet vales of heaven! For their horrid guilt, they are in everlasting exile from that happy world! cast down to hell—and what kind of a place is that? a pit that has no bottom—a lake burning with fire and brimstone—

"A dungeon, horrible on all sides round,

As one great furnace flames! yet from those flames

No light ! but rather darkness visible !  
Which serves only to discover sights of wo,  
Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace  
And rest can never dwell, hope never come !”

My brethren, believe me, or rather believe the sacred volume, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The rebel angels, in sinning against God, gained nothing, but lost much ! And so must it be with all who dare rebel against their Maker, and who with the Great Eternal provoke unequal war. But this leads us

II. To compare and contrast the war of rebel angels in heaven with the war of rebel men on earth ; and, for this purpose chiefly, have I selected the passage of Scripture now before us. The dragon and his angels gained no victories in heaven ; but, shall I say it ? they have succeeded in gaining allies on earth ! Yes, the human race, seduced from their allegiance by the great tempter, have made common cause with fallen angels, and are now in arms against the everlasting God ! Yes, awful and melancholy as the thought is, it is even so ! Satan has succeeded in pouring much of his venom into the human heart ; and multitudes of the human family are now ranged with him under the banner of revolt ! Not all ! No ! blessed be God, some, sweetly subdued by heavenly grace, have laid down the weapons of their rebellion. Through the interposition of the great Redeemer, and the powerful energies of the Divine Spirit, they have made their peace with God ; and now, ranged under his banner, they are the willing subjects of his moral government. But the multitude, the great mass

of the human family, sorry am I to say, this moment, leagued with the dragon and his angels, are fighting against the God who made them. Do you demand proof? Look around you, and see how many are enemies to God by wicked works—how many profane his Sabbaths! how many blaspheme his holy name! how many slight his word! how many reject the Son of his love! how many indulge in riot and debauchery, how many in theft and murder! Ah! my brethren, the fact is but too evident—the world lies in wickedness. It is now, and ever since the fall has been, a rebellious province of Jehovah's dominions. I have nourished and brought up children, says God, and they have rebelled against me. And does not the apostle Paul affirm that the carnal mind is enmity against God? and does he not address the unrenewed as those arrayed against their Maker. Notice his language: "Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." The case is clear—all unregenerate sinners—(and do they not constitute the mass of the human family?)—are in a state of open opposition and downright rebellion against their Maker! O it is an impious contest, a most unholy war! But we promised to compare and contrast the war of rebel men on earth, with that of rebel angels in heaven. In many things the resemblance is most exact and striking; in only one thing is there a difference.

First. Was the war of rebel angels a wilful war? So also is the war of rebel men. It is true the original dispensations to angels and to men were not the same. The



former stood or fell, each for himself: the latter in their federal head, Adam, the head and representative of his race, broke covenant with God—wilfully sinned, and thus, so to speak, in his own name and that of all his posterity, declared war against his Maker, as a sovereign acting in behalf of the people whom he represents. “By one man’s disobedience,” says the apostle, “were many made sinners”—that is, the act of Adam, in breaking covenant with God, was reckoned as the act of his posterity; in proof of this position, we find the consequences of the fall extending to the whole human family. But there is another view of the matter. All mankind, it is true, by virtue of their connection with Adam, as their federal head, are, equally with him, involved in the ruins of the fall; but infinite wisdom and love have planned and executed a scheme by which the ruins of the fall may be restored, and man may again be brought into favor with his Maker. Our blessed Saviour having, by his death and sufferings, made the great atonement, the gospel of peace and reconciliation is preached, and all who will are invited to come through the Mediator, and obtain peace with their offended Maker, and even everlasting life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, those who refuse and reject the overtures of mercy, do evidently continue in wilful rebellion, and in this way do, deliberately, to all intents and purposes, sanction the act of their federal head, and make it their own; and that they are wilful in this matter, is evident from many passages of Scripture, especially from the language of our Saviour, “Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life.”

Ah! my brethren, it is even so. God calls, but sinners will not hear. He stretches out his hand, but sinners will not regard. He offers them mercy on gospel terms, and repeatedly offers it, but they wilfully reject it; and, by their conduct, daringly say, with Pharoah, "Who is the Lord, that we should obey him? we know not the Lord, neither will we obey his voice." And what is this but wilful rebellion? Besides, oftentimes the Spirit of God moves upon the heart of the sinner, but the sinner braces himself up against these divine influences; and the charge brought by Stephen against certain Jews in his day, may with but too much propriety be brought against many of the unconverted at the present time: "Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." In other words, in resisting the strivings of the Divine Spirit, and wilfully stifling their convictions, they fight against God, and there is a wilfulness in this matter which adds greatly to their sin.

Secondly. Was the war of rebel angels an irreconcilable war? Thank God, here we can drop the comparison, and take up the contrast. Yes, on this theatre of war, in the midst of heaven-daring rebels, our blessed Redeemer has, by the shedding of his most precious blood, made the great atonement. Elevated upon the cross, this glorious God-man Mediator has, so to speak, laid one hand upon divinity and the other upon humanity, and in this way, has accomplished a blessed work of love and reconciliation—has thus opened up a way, whereby God can be just, and yet justify the penitent and believing sinner—the sinner who accepts of Christ as his surety and only

hope; as it is written, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." And again, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Ah! my brethren, had the blessed Jesus not interposed, the hope of heavenly grace had never cheered the heart of man! This is the Good Shepherd, who, when he saw a hundred worlds rolling around his Father's throne, and this was lost, left the ninety-and-nine in the wilderness of space, and came to seek and to save this lost world!

"O love divine! Harp, lift thy voice on high!  
Shout angels! Shout aloud, ye sons of men,  
And burn, my heart, with the eternal flame."

Millions of the human family have already been reconciled to God by the death of his Son, and have been made forever happy by redeeming love; and millions more, drawn from the standard of revolt, and ranged under the banner of the great Redeemer, shall yet enter the dwellings of the blest, and take rank amongst the angels of God, in glory everlasting. O how thankful should we be, that whilst the war of rebel angels is irreconcilable, the war of rebel men may be brought to a speedy and happy termination. This is a blessed truth, and I love to present it; but let it not be forgotten, that the period of possible reconciliation is a limited period. In this world sinners may make their peace with God—but in this world only. When death's leaden sceptre is laid upon the cold bosom, the state of the sinner is fixed

forever! Ever after there is no redemption, there is no hope!

‘There are no acts of pardon passed,  
In the cold grave to which we haste;  
But darkness, death, and long despair,  
Reign in eternal silence there!

O how important is it, then, that every one of us diligently improve our day of grace on earth; and, with all our heart, seek salvation while “pardon may be sought and mercy may be found.” But,

Thirdly. Was the war of rebel angels an unreasonable war? And what shall we say of the war of rebel men? O, my brethren, how shall we vindicate foolish, infatuated man? Angels sinned against creating goodness—man against redeeming love. Angels warred under black despair—man under hope of heavenly grace. The sword of justice pursued revolting angels—the wings of mercy were outstretched to shelter revolting man. And yet man rebels. Infatuated man! what would he have?—Riches? In rejecting the grace of God he rejects the true riches. Honor? There is no honor like that which cometh down from God only. Safety? Everlasting arms are round about them who put their trust in Israel’s God. Happiness? And where can happiness be found but in Him who is the only true source and fountain of all enjoyment? And yet the sinner rebels! O how unreasonable! In rebelling against God, the sinner loses much, everything that should be dear and precious to the soul. And what does he gain? Nothing! literally nothing!



except it be an upbraiding conscience, an aching heart, and a burning hell! O, how does the sinner sin against his own judgment, his own interest, and his own happiness! and moreover, against all motives and considerations which should affect him. He knows that the way of transgressors is hard, and yet he sins on! He knows that his sins will find him out, and yet he sins on! He knows that the arm of God is powerful, and cannot be resisted, and yet he sins on! He knows that there is forgiveness for the penitent, and yet he sins on! And that certain damnation awaits the impenitent, and yet he sins on! Infatuated man! In the view of all the glories of the heavenly world, in view of all the horrors of the world of wo, and, moreover, in view of all the love of God, and all the agonies of a dying Saviour—in short, in view of everything calculated to subdue and melt the heart, he sins on! Be astonished, O heavens! and O earth! earth! earth! hear the complaint of the Eternal God—"I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me." But,

Fourthly. Was the war of rebel angels fatal and disastrous? So, also, most assuredly, will be the continued war of rebel men. Millions have already fallen in the impious contest, and shall rise no more. My friends, God is a God of power. His throne is in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. There are none that can measure swords with him, nor snatch the sceptre from his hand, nor resist the power of his arm! He need only speak, and worlds on worlds would roll from his creative hand! He need only will it, and all

would again sink in fiery ruins! It is true, according to the Psalmist, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." Shall they succeed? Shall they prevail? What says the Psalmist again? "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh. The Lord shall have them in derision. He shall break them with a rod of iron; he shall dash them in pieces, like a potter's vessel." O, when God shall arise to judge the earth, what a day will that be! Great day of God Almighty and the Lamb! O, how will sinners then quail! how will every rebel's face gather blackness! For God will come to reckon with sinners then, and terrible will be the manner of his coming. Lightnings shall flash from his piercing eyes—thunders shall roll around his awful throne! Yea, he shall come with his chariots, like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebukes with flames of fire; and most fearful, indeed, will be the condition of those who shall then, as sinners, fall into the hands of the living God. They will call upon the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them! They will shriek in agony! They will wish they had never been born, or had slumbered forever in the silent grave. O, my fellow sinner, think upon this matter now, before it be forever too late! You are now contending against your Maker; you have taken sides with the dragon and his angels; you are this moment ranged under the black banner of Apollyon; and, if the war of rebel angels was to rebel

angels fatal and disastrous, so also must be the impious struggle in which you are engaged, if continued in. "For," says the Scripture, "who ever hardened himself against him and prospered? Yea, when God enters into judgment, he will overcome; yea, verily, the triumphs of Jehovah must ever be glorious to himself, but terrible to the workers of iniquity."

My brethren, our text this morning is an interesting one; and, viewed in the application which we have made of it, it is to us of deep personal interest and importance. "There was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven." Remember, the scene is changed, but the war is not ended yet. Yes, here! here on this globe of ours, the warfare is going on still! for, according to the Scriptures, Satan, fallen from heaven, has come down to earth! Here he has planted his standard, and, alas! man has madly taken sides with this fallen spirit. This is the great battle-field of the universe. Many eyes are looking on, and here must the battle be fought, and here brought to a final close. Is the result doubtful? No! assuredly. For, can an atom contend against a mountain? or can the chaff resist the sweeping whirlwind? No more can the sinner contend against his Maker. War in any form, and against any power, is a terrible thing; and according to the might of the enemy is the terror of the conflict. Valor reigned in the bosom of Leonidas and his Spartan band; yet, methinks, brave and heroic as they were, they must have

quailed before the mighty power of a Xerxes. Valor reigned in the bosom of our Washington and his associate heroes, and yet, no doubt, even they felt awful in the prospect of meeting the power of England upon the tented field. But what is the power of a Xerxes, or the power of England, in comparison with the power of the great God, who can "dash whole worlds to death, and make them when he pleases?" Those who array themselves against an earthly power, however formidable that power may appear, may nevertheless succeed; but there is no succeeding against Omnipotence. God must be victorious, and all his enemies must and will be subdued! But even suppose the patriot soldier knows that he must fall before his enemy, and perish on the field of battle; yet, if his cause is a good one, this animates him, and he can say, '*Dulce et decorum est, pro patria mori.*'" It is sweet and glorious to die for one's country! How sleep the brave! How delightful to have our memory embalmed in the hearts of our grateful countrymen! But there is no such consolation for the sinner, who, ranged under the black banner of Apollyon, is engaged in a cause which his own reason now condemns; and perishing, he will have nothing to console him in a dying hour, nor through all the ages of a gloomy and unblest eternity. O, sinner! sinner! you are fighting against your own interest, your own happiness! You have taken sides with the dragon and his angels, you are fighting with fiends, against your own soul, and against the God who made you! O, be entreated! This day lay down the weapons of your rebel-



lion, this day change sides, make your peace with your Maker; and when your life on earth is ended, you shall have a place in heaven, and there be happy forever.

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## SERMON IX.

### ON SEEKING THE LORD.

Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.—  
ISAIAH LV. 6.

My brethren, if a man wants wealth, he seeks it; if he desires fame, he seeks it; if he has set his heart upon the attainment of any temporal object which he deems important, he makes a diligent use of the proper means for the attainment of that object. This principle is correct, and upon it is based the words of our text—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." David said, "When thou saidst, Seek ye my face, my heart said unto thee, Thy face, Lord, will I seek." Hezekiah was commended because he sought the Lord with all his heart; and Josiah, because he sought the Lord whilst he was young. The direction in our text is a standing one:—Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Some persons are ready to say, "You ministers of the gospel are frequently urging us to attend to the great concern, and warning us of the danger of dying in our sins, but why do you not pour a little light upon the subject? Why

do you not tell us plainly what we are to do?" Well, now, if I tell you what is to be done, will you attend to it? If I mark out the way to heaven, will you walk in it? Then listen! If you would be saved, you must seek the Lord, and if you would do this successfully, there are three things which must be done: You must take Jesus Christ for your way; the Divine Spirit for your helper; and the sacred volume for your guide. To be sure, I might say to the serious inquirer, as Paul did to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved;" or as Peter did to certain Jerusalem sinners, when awakened, "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." But you wish me to be more extended in my remarks, then let me call your attention to the three things stated.

I. You are to take Jesus Christ as your way; and for this we have his own authority, as he expressly says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," (or, as it may be rendered, "the true and living way,") "and no man cometh unto the Father but by me." In the economy of redemption Jesus Christ is "all and in all." He is our only advocate and Mediator. In him, God is reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing to them their iniquities; but out of Christ, God is a consuming fire. Those who are accepted, are accepted in the Beloved, and those who are not accepted in the Beloved, are not accepted at all; as it is written, "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This is all very plain,

and this in substance is taught by every true minister of Christ, on every Sabbath day, and yet many persons, when awakened, and when stirred up to seek the salvation of their souls, make an error at the very outset. They go to God the Father without having any reference to Christ, as the appointed Mediator. Now, this will not answer, for the Saviour says expressly, in language already recited, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me." There was corn in Egypt when the famine prevailed, and when those who needed corn came unto Pharaoh, he said unto them, Go to Joseph, I have made him Lord over all Egypt, therefore go to Joseph. Should they neglect this direction, and come to Pharaoh the second time, methinks he would say, Did I not tell you to go to Joseph? he is appointed over this matter. Go to Joseph! Should they come to Pharaoh the third time, without regarding his direction, methinks he would say, Leave my kingdom instantly!—no man who will not submit to the law of the realm shall receive supplies. Leave my kingdom without delay! Even so in this matter. Christ is Lord of all, and without him there is no salvation, and there is no hope. But again; some persons setting out to seek the salvation of their souls make another blunder. Instead of coming to Christ in the exercise of love, and an appropriating faith, they go to their duties. They think that they are not good enough to come to Christ yet, and therefore they purpose to make themselves a little better first; just like those of whom Paul speaks, who, "being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going

about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Rom. x. 3. And why this? Because this great doctrine is forgotten, or not properly understood, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;" and, as the apostle teaches in another place, that "a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Rom. iii. 28. My brethren, I repeat it, in the economy of redemption Christ is all in all. This must be clearly understood and acted upon, by all who would seek the Lord and find him in the salvation of their souls. The language of the poet is both beautiful and correct:

"Jesus! lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the raging billows roll,  
While the tempest still is high.  
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide;  
O, receive my soul at last.

"Other refuge have I none!  
Hangs my helpless soul on thee;  
Leave, ah! leave me not alone,  
Still support and comfort me.  
All my trust on thee is staid,  
All my help from thee I bring;  
Cover my defenceless head  
With the shadow of thy wing."

II. You must take the Divine Spirit as your helper. Even if the sinner were pardoned by virtue of the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, there is still an inward work



of grace and sanctification to be accomplished, to fit him for heaven. And, as the angel of the Lord said unto Elijah, "Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for thee," so may we say to the awakened sinner, who asks what he must do to be saved—Arise and seek divine aid, for the work is too great for thee. For example, the sinner's heart is to be changed. As it is written, "O, Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness that thou mayst be saved!" Jer. iv. 14. And again: "Make you a new heart, and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xviii. 31. Now the sinner, of himself, can no more accomplish this great work than he can roll a mountain, or heave an ocean! What then? Shall he say, I cannot accomplish the work—it is the work of the Spirit: his influences are absolutely necessary—I will leave it to the Spirit—and I will do nothing. Shall he say this? Certainly not. The showers of heaven we all know are absolutely necessary to the production of a crop. Planters! if God should seal up the clouds of heaven, and send no rain upon the earth for three years and six months, as in the time of the prophet, you might fence in your field, and plough up your ground, and scatter your seed; but it would be all in vain. What then? Does the planter say, The showers of heaven are absolutely necessary to the production of a crop—I will do nothing—I will sit still and leave it to the showers of heaven to fence in my field, and plough up my ground, and scatter the seed. Does he say this? We know that he does not. Well, the winds of heaven, also, are necessary to waft the merchant-ship over the ocean. The ship-

master knows it full well; and does he say, I will not weigh the anchor—I will not spread the canvass—I will not consult the chart—the winds of heaven are absolutely necessary to waft my ship over the ocean, I will leave it all to the winds of heaven? O no, we never hear anything of this kind. In temporal matters, sinners usually act wisely and discreetly; but in spiritual matters, all seem to be perverse and wrong. There need be no difficulty. As in temporal, so in spiritual matters. There must be the meeting of the divine and human agency. See the children of Israel at Pihahiroth; they are hemmed in on all sides; mountains on this side, mountains on that side; behind them, Pharaoh with his army pressing on; and before them, the Red Sea! Now, are they not completely hemmed in? They are unarmed, and it is clear deliverance can come only from above. But they were delivered. How? By the meeting of the human and divine agency:—God directs Moses to stretch his rod over the Red Sea. Moses, if perverse, might have said, Lord God, what is the use of stretching the rod over the Red Sea? He was not perverse. The command was given: Stretch the rod over the Red Sea. He obeyed—he stretched the rod. Here was the putting forth of the human agency! Immediately the divine agency came down with mighty power upon the waters of the Red Sea, and lo! they parted asunder, and the children of Israel passed through on dry ground! Now, here was the meeting of both the divine and human agency, and yet all who looked on knew very well, that the only efficient agent was God; hence, the tribes, with one accord,

on the other side of the banks of the Red Sea, sang God's praises, not the praises of Moses. Take another case. The children of Israel, in the wilderness, on a certain occasion, were ready to perish with thirst.

"They longed for a cooling stream,  
And they must drink or die."

And now, who can furnish water for such a multitude, in this parched, waste, and howling wilderness? Assuredly, none but God only. It was furnished—How? and in what manner? By the meeting of the human and divine agency, as we said before. God directs Moses to reach forth his rod and smite the rock. He did so, and lo! the water gushed in great abundance from the smitten rock. The children of Israel crowded around; drank of the cool flowing stream, slaked their thirst, and praised, not Moses, but the God of Israel; for all saw plainly that, although Moses smote the rock, it was God, and God only, who caused the water to gush forth. I repeat it, my brethren, there need be no difficulty in understanding this matter. The work to be accomplished is great, utterly beyond the sinner's power; but he may obtain help from on high. As it is written, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me." Isaiah xxvii. 5. And again: "Fear not, I am with thee, I will help thee, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness." I am aware that this last passage has special reference to the people of God who are in trouble; but certainly it may be quoted for the encouragement of all who, sensible

that they need help from above, are disposed to call upon God in sincerity and in truth; for the command given to all, is this: "Seek the Lord, and his strength; seek his face evermore." Psalm cv. 4. Some persons, speaking on the subject of man's ability and inability, have indulged in metaphysical speculations, and have brought a vast amount of learned lore to bear upon the subject, and after all, have only darkened counsel by words without knowledge; and I have frequently thought that their account of the matter is no better than Doctor Johnson's definition of the term net-work: "Anything reticulated or decussated with interstices at equal distances between the intersections." This is a very learned definition of a very simple thing; but, although learned and rather hard to be understood, it is, after all, I believe, not correct; for, to constitute "net-work," it is not necessary that the reticulations should be at equal distances between the intersections. But to return to the doctrine of man's ability and inability, permit me to say, there is one passage of Scripture which is worth whole volumes of merely human composition. It is this: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." Philip. ii. 12. The idea is this: that we are to attend to our soul's salvation as if we could by our own unaided effort accomplish the object in view, and at the same time rely upon divine aid, as if we literally could do nothing at all. God is ever ready to help those who are disposed to bestir themselves, and look to him for help. Let the cry of the sinner then be the cry of the Cyrenian woman,



"Lord help me!" or the cry of Peter sinking in the water, "Lord, save or I perish!" All this falls in precisely with the language of our text: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." Once more :

III. You must take the sacred volume for your guide. It will not do to follow our own fancies, nor square our conduct by the rules which men may prescribe. No, we must, with the simplicity of little children, find out the directions which are laid down in the Scriptures of truth, and follow them. Now, in the sacred volume certain things are laid down as important, indeed as indispensable, and these must not be neglected. If you would seek the Lord and find him in the salvation of your souls,

I. You must seek him in the forsaking of all your sins. This is a direction which immediately follows the words of our text—"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, who will abundantly pardon." Yes, if the sinner would be saved, he must part with every sin. Though dear as a right hand, he must cut it off; though dear as a right eye, he must pluck it out. Some persons, when awakened, are willing to part with some sins, but not others. There is some darling idol; some beloved lust, or what the apostle calls "besetting sin," which they are not willing to give up, but they must give it up, for Christ came not to be the minister of sin, but to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. "His name shall be called Jesus," said the angel, "for he shall save his people

from their sins." Mark! shall save his people, not *in* their sins, but *from* their sins; and this may remind us of the words of the Psalmist, uttered so many ages since—"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Observe—not merely, if he indulges sin in his life, but sin in his heart. I repeat it, then, there can be no compromise in this matter. Sin must be relinquished, every sin; yea, *every* sin, whether open or secret; whether fashionable or unfashionable; whether gainful or the reverse; whether it be in the life or only in the heart. Some may think this a hard requirement, but it is right, and it must stand. Some persons, as we have said, are willing to part with many sins, but not with all, and this holds them in check. They think that they are in peculiar circumstances, and desire some little indulgence in certain matters. Concerning this and that favorite sin they are ready to say with Lot, in reference to Zoar, "O, is it not a little one?" or with Naaman, in relation to a certain matter, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." O these favorite, these besetting sins, how hard is it to give them up!

I recollect a certain man—pride was his besetting sin. He seemed to be constitutionally proud and haughty. He was under serious impressions a long time, and it was only when he was laid upon a bed of sickness, and brought to the borders of the grave, that his pride was subdued. I recollect another who was intemperate. He was a tavern-keeper. Powerfully wrought upon, he attended an inquiry-meeting. As I approached to the seat which he occupied he rose up, and with much

emotion took me by the hand. (I give you the substance of our conversation.) "O, sir," said he, "I feel that I am a sinner; what must I do to be saved?" "Sir," replied I, "you must give up your bottle. A little nettled, he replied, "I do not choose to make rash promises." "Very well," said I, "you may do as you please, but I tell you the truth; you must give up your bottle or your soul." He mused awhile, and finally concluding, it seems, that his bottle was worth more than his soul, he gathered up his hat and cane and walked out, and I saw him no more. Like Esau, my dear brethren, like Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright; and ye know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. O these besetting sins, they have ruined many! Another case may be mentioned. A certain individual was brought under very pungent conviction. He cried for mercy, but for several days received no comfort. He had had a difficulty with a certain person some time before, and upon examining his heart, he found that he indulged in an unforgiving spirit. Certainly it is all plain now. The Saviour says, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive you your trespasses." This man owed his maker ten thousand talents, and was crying for forgiveness, and yet he himself would not forgive a fellow creature who owed him fifty pence! Ah! my brethren, we are taught to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against

us." When, therefore, we utter this petition, and do not forgive those who have injured us, we do virtually pray that God will not forgive us. Remember, God knows what is within us as well as what is without us, and the Psalmist says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." But excuse me, my brethren, and I will mention yet another case illustrative of the point before us. In a certain town in Virginia there was a revival of religion. Amongst the anxious who came to the meeting as inquirers on a certain day was a talented young lawyer. He appeared to be in very great distress of mind. "O sir," exclaimed he, in agony, "must I be everlastingly damned?" "By no means," said I, "my dear sir, by no means. It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." He left the meeting still unrelieved. What can be the matter? The case was this:—He had just commenced the practice of the law. It was, with him, a favorite pursuit, and from this quarter he expected wealth and distinction. When brought under conviction, he recollected a prediction uttered by an aunt of his upon her dying bed, some time before, that he would yet be converted, and become a preacher of the gospel. Now, thought he, my aunt's prediction is coming true; I am going now to be converted, and then I shall have to give up my profession as a lawyer and become a preacher. This he could not consent to—would almost rather be damned than become a preacher. Now, my brethren, observe, I do not say it



is wrong for a young man to be a lawyer, but it is very wrong, very sinful, to be self-willed. This was the difficulty with this young man. He wished to have his own way; and he did not wish any one, not even the ever blessed God, to cross his path; and it was whilst in this frame of mind he exclaimed, "And must I be everlastingly damned?" A few days afterwards, his will being sweetly subdued, he obtained a joyful hope in Christ, and being asked, "Mr. B——, are you willing to be a preacher now, if God shall so direct?" Claspings his hands, and looking with eyes streaming with tears, he said, "Any thing now! Blessed God, any thing now!" My dear friends, you that are now under awakening influences, let me entreat you to look into your hearts, as well as your lives, and when you are told that you must seek the Lord in the forsaking of all of your sins, O remember, I pray you, in connection with it, the words of the Psalmist, already more than once repeated, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."

2. You must seek him at the right time. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Those guilty spirits upon whom the light of eternity has dawned cannot seek him now, for their day of grace is past. By them God cannot now be found; to them he is not near, nor ever will be. Their glass is run, their sun is set, and their souls are lost forever! The living! the living! those who are on mercy's side of eternity—they are the ones who may seek the Lord; and they are to do it whilst yet they are

in the land of hope, and whilst yet permitted to enjoy the means of grace, and entertain the hope of glory. But, as there is such a thing as seed time and harvest time, so there are certain seasons more favorable than others for attending to the great concern, and seeking the salvation of the soul. For example: The period of youth is a golden season; it may emphatically be called an accepted time and day of salvation, for as yet the heart is not hardened, nor the person hackneyed in the ways of sin. Moreover, there are special promises addressed to the young: "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me;" and to them a special command is given, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." Hence we find that an overwhelming majority of those who are pious are brought in, in the morning of life. Indeed, comparatively speaking, there are few soundly converted after thirty years of age. If any one passes the period of youth, a stranger to regeneration, I consider that his best day is over, and that his prospect for heaven is darkening horribly! O, my dear young friends, precious youth, you are the hope of the Church! Upon you many eyes are turned, and for you many prayers are offered. Remember, this is emphatically your time, and it may be with you, now or never! A season of revival is also a peculiarly favorable season for seeking the salvation of the soul. Besides divine influences coming down as copious dews and showers of rain upon a thirsty land, softening and mellowing the

soil, there are special advantages, and special means of grace enjoyed. Religious meetings are multiplied, sermons more pungent, prayers more fervent, spiritual conversation more frequent; and then there is the rousing intelligence that this friend is awakened, and that converted; and who does not know that young converts are, usually, not inactive. Having found the one pearl of great price, they greatly desire to see their old companions in the possession of the same blessing. Having experienced the grace of God in their own hearts, they cannot but "tell to those around what a dear Saviour they have found." With David they are inclined to say to every unconverted friend, "O, taste, and see that the Lord is good;" and as Moses said to Hobab, his brother-in-law, so are they ready to say to every dear relative, "We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you; come thou with us, and we will do thee good; for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel." Here are new means of grace enjoyed, new appeals made, new considerations presented. In short, all the scenes and circumstances of the case are eminently calculated to wake up serious thought in the bosom, and rouse the soul to an immediate consideration of the high claims of God and eternity. Surely, then, a season of revival is a precious season—it is a golden opportunity afforded for attending to the interests of the undying soul. In the great mercy of God this season you now enjoy, for right happy am I to say, the Lord is pouring out his Spirit here. Christians! the Lord has heard your prayers, and in answer to them he has granted you a

season of refreshing from his presence. You are now in the midst of a revival! How delightfully does this announcement fall upon the ear. Yes, I repeat it, and to God be all the glory, you are now in the midst of a revival! The Lord is come! "The Lord is come, let earth receive her King; let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing!" O yes, let every heart prepare him room! O, sinner, will you not throw open the door of your heart and let the heavenly stranger in? Do not, I beseech you, do not let this season pass unimproved. The time may come when you may desire to see the things which you now see, and shall not see them; and to hear the things which you now hear, and shall not hear them. Yes, the time may come when you shall have to take up the dismal lamentation, I have lost my day; the harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved.

Again: when the Spirit is striving is another peculiarly favorable season for seeking the salvation of the soul. We may not be able to explain or understand how the Divine Spirit operates upon the mind of man, but that there is such an operation there can be no doubt, for the Scriptures affirm it, and that these operations are more powerful at one time than another, this fact also cannot be denied; for sometimes the word of God is made to burn upon the conscience in a very peculiar manner, and a new concern in relation to spiritual things is waked up in the soul. There is a more realizing sense of the vanity of the world, of the importance of religion, than common; moreover, the person has a livelier sense of his own sin-



fulness and need of a Saviour, than perhaps he ever had before. He begins to envy the lot of the pious, and wishes that he too were a Christian. Now, also, he takes more interest in attending upon the ordinances of God's house, and feels more inclined to read the Scriptures than usual. This is a blessed season. Now the words of the Saviour are peculiarly applicable, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open to me, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me." And now this passage of Scripture, too, is peculiarly appropriate, "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart;" and this, "Quench not the Spirit." This, as we have said, is truly a blessed season, but it is moreover a critical time, for sins committed in these circumstances are sins committed against more light and more love than ordinary, and therefore are peculiarly sinful. O, are there any in this large and solemn assembly under the strivings of the Spirit? Remember you are now in peculiarly solemn circumstances. You have now come to the place where two seas meet. You may now, so to speak, be casting the die for eternity! At any rate, God is come down, by his Spirit to talk with you; yea, you have now a loud call from heaven—beware how you turn a deaf ear to it, for it may be your last!

' Spurn not the call to life and light,  
 Regard in time the warning kind;  
 That call thou may'st not always slight,  
 And yet the gate of mercy find.

"God's Spirit will not always strive  
 With hardened, self-destroying man;

Ye who persist his love to grieve,  
May never hear his voice again."

With great emphasis, then, may the language of our text be sounded in your ears; and may it go thundering through all the chambers of your souls, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Once more,

3. You must seek the Lord with all your heart. "Blessed are they that seek him with the whole heart," says the Psalmist; and says the Eternal God himself—"And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Jer. xxix. 13. The object in view is a great object, and demands the whole soul. Some persons seek the Lord, but they do it with a divided heart. Antagonistical principles seem to be at work within them, and they are drawn in different directions. Sometimes they are greatly excited; almost persuaded to be Christians, but something seems to hold them. They are very much like a balloon ready to ascend, but bound down to the earth by a cord; or like a tree, undermined by the torrent, and thrown upon the bosom of the stream, a current is bearing strongly upon it to sweep it along, and yet it is not swept along. And why? There are some roots binding it to the bank. Cut the roots and then it will go, but so long as the roots remain uncut, so long does it there remain, see-sawing, notwithstanding the current which bears so strongly upon it. Just so, many a sinner, undermined by the power of divine truth, is thrown prostrate in deep distress and humiliation; a current of divine influences is bearing

strongly upon him, to waft him to Christ and to glory, but there are some roots binding him to the earth. Now, the sinner must cut the roots. He must break away from all the influences of the world. He must give up everything which interferes with his duty to the Maker. He must do it, or he cannot expect divine acceptance—he must do it, or he must lose his soul. For no man can serve two masters, and it is quite impossible to be earthly-minded and heavenly-minded at the same time. I recollect making a remark of this kind from the desk, at a certain place in Virginia. On coming down from the pulpit, a gentleman came up to me—he was a lawyer of high respectability—he came up to me, and grasping my hand with emotion, said:—"Stranger, you have described my case exactly. Those roots, sir, those roots—they have almost ruined me. God helping me, I'll cut the roots!" I saw decision marked in his countenance. His mind was made up to have salvation, cost what it might. No wonder that about two days after he was rejoicing in Christ, and subsequently became a much valued elder of the church. Ah, my brethren, it is a great matter to have the mind made up; and I have observed that when the mind is fully made up, the battle is half won. Only let a person be in right down good earnest in seeking the salvation of his soul, and the blessing is nigh, even at the door. And is it not reasonable, when such great interests are at stake, that the mind should be made up? Is it not reasonable, when nothing less than eternal life is the prize, that the sinner should be in good earnest? See how it is with the man who is in the pursuit of wealth: he leaves no stone

untuned to increase his golden store. And see the man of ambition, who pants after fame, and greatly desires to reach some post of honor and distinction; how constantly is he thinking upon the subject! how diligent is he in the use of all means for the attainment of the object in view! and if he succeed not, verily his want of success is not to be ascribed either to a want of resolution or lack of effort. And when life, temporal life, is at stake, O what struggles, what determination then! For example—Roused from his slumbers at a midnight hour, a man finds his house on fire; his determination is to make his escape. Springing from his bed without delay, he rushes to the door. Does he find that locked, he hurries to the window. Is that fastened, he cries for help, again rushes to the door, again to the window. No difficulties cause him to give over his efforts to make his escape: they only rouse him to still greater and more determined efforts. He loses no time, puts forth all his strength, strains every nerve to break open the window, to break down the door, and if he perishes, it is whilst struggling with all his might—if he is consumed, it is because his most vigorous and determined efforts have all proved unavailing. O, if sinners would but be in such good earnest in seeking the salvation of their souls, how certainly would they attain everlasting life, how certainly would a crown of glory rest upon their heads. But, alas! when roused to make some efforts, how frequently is it the case that these efforts are not as resolute and determined as they should be. They are interrupted by this thing and that. There are difficulties in the way, and various excuses are made,



at the very time that the sinner should be crying for mercy and seeking help from on high. Nehemiah and his associates had great difficulty in building up the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down. They wrought with one hand, while they held a weapon in the other, and the result was this—by the good hand of God over them, they succeeded: as it is written—“So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof, for the people had a mind to work.” Notice the phrase, “the people had a mind to work.” Here was the secret of their success—their heart was in the matter; they were in good earnest in the work in which they were engaged. You have heard of the Revolutionary struggle. Thirteen feeble colonies contended for independence against the mighty power of England. That is, the eagle of the West, scarcely fledged, engaged in deadly conflict with the lion of the East, in his full strength and vigor; and to the astonishment of the world success crowned the effort; our independence was achieved. How? Under God, by the power of resolution. The great secret of our success may be found in the closing sentence of that immortal document, denominated the Declaration of Independence. It is in these words: “In defence of these principles, we pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.” O could we see this spirit of fixed and settled determination carried into religious matters; could we hear this one and that one saying with the Psalmist, “My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;” or with Joshua, “Choose you this day whom ye will serve—but as for me and my house, we will serve

the Lord." · Could this spirit but animate every bosom in this assembly, O what delightful scenes would here be presented; verily, the voice of joy and gratulation would be heard in every dwelling—we should truly have a pentecostal time, yea—the millennium in miniature; for remember, the promise is, Ye shall seek me, and find me when you search for me with all your heart. O ye who wish a blessing from on high, lay hold upon this blessed promise; take God at his word; put him upon his honor, and eternal life is sure. Eternal life! O think what a boon, what a prize this is! Eternal life! what is it? Were I a glorified spirit, I would know it; were I an adoring seraph, I would feel it; but were I a glorified spirit or an adoring seraph, I could never, no never describe it. It is to be rescued from the ruins of the fall, and restored to the favor of God! It is to be delivered from the perils and pangs of everlasting damnation, and to be placed in possession of all the bliss and glories of an eternal world of glory! In short, it is to be saved from sin and all its consequences, and to be made unspeakably happy, and that forever, and for evermore! A certain ship, as we are informed, was caught up by a tremendous tempest and dashed upon the rocks. The passengers and crew were precipitated into the deep; twelve persons succeeded in getting into the life-boat; one poor creature more, struggling in the water, swam up to the boat, laid his right hand upon it, and attempted to get in. But one within, with a sword, cut off his hand! (It was apprehended that if another was taken in, the boat would sink.) But what was the poor man

to do? There was no safety in the wreck; he could not swim to land, it was far out of sight—the boat! the boat! he must get into the boat, or he must perish! Struggling desperately with the rolling billows, he came up to the boat a second time, and grasped it with his left hand. That too was cut off! O poor creature, both hands bleeding, and death looking him in the face, what must he do? “Skin for skin, all that a man hath will he give for his life.” He fixed his eyes again upon the boat, he came up to it the third time and grasped the rudder with his teeth. Pity touched the heart of those within, and rather than to cut off his head they resolved to run the risk of all perishing together. They took him in, and his life was saved! O sinner, you are shipwrecked—you are perishing! There is no safety for you in the wreck and you cannot swim to land; it is far away—do you ask what it is to be done? There is a life-boat at hand; Christ is this life-boat;—struggle, O struggle up to him; he will not cut off the hand which you imploringly reach out to him! O no! no! “His heart is made of tenderness—his bowels melt with love.” Cut off your hand! He himself reaches out both of his arms to receive you! O how ready is He to save you from perishing—how able and willing to save your soul! O that this day may be with you the day of decision, the birth-day of your precious souls! Come, dear friends, everything seems now propitious! O come this day, and cast in your lot with the people of God, and let us all have one lot, one Jesus, one heaven, one home!

## SERMON X.

## THE DUTY OF COMING TO CHRIST.

No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.—JOHN  
VI. 44.

IN the economy of redemption, my brethren, Jesus Christ is all, and in all ! He is the hiding-place from the wind, and without him there is no covert from the tempest ; he is the physician of souls, and without him there is no spiritual cure ; he is the Saviour of the lost, and without him there is no salvation. Hence the unceasing efforts made to direct all eyes and all hearts to him. John the Baptist, pointing him out to his disciples, exclaims, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world !" "We have seen and do testify," says John the apostle, "that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." "There is salvation in none other," says Peter. "Other foundation," says Paul, "can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And, according to the testimony of the apostle Peter, in another place, this great truth was well known to the Old Testament saints. "For," says he, "to him (Jesus Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through him, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins ;" and we must not forget the closing testimony of John the Baptist, uttered with so much solemnity : "The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands : he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life ; and he that



believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." To crown the whole, hear the words of the blessed Saviour himself: "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life, and no man cometh unto the Father but by me." And again: "If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." In the economy of redemption, then, Christ being all in all, permit me here to make the following remarks, which I wish to be distinctly remembered:

I. It is the sinner's duty to come to Christ; and by coming to Christ I mean believing in him, resting upon him as the sinner's only hope. Now, we say, it is the sinner's duty to come to Christ. Some persons seem to imagine it is left to their own option whether they come or not, but it is not so; they are commanded to come, and they cannot neglect to come without incurring the guilt of wilful disobedience, and we may add, the guilt of self-destruction. Here is a man shut up in a house which is on fire—a door is thrown open, by which he may make his escape—is it not his duty, by that door, to make his escape? Here is a person who is dying under the influence of poison received into the system; an effectual antidote is offered to him; should he reject that antidote and die, is he not guilty of self-murder? But,

II. It is the sinner's interest to come to Christ. It is remarkable, how beautifully and closely duty and interest are linked together in the sacred volume. We are commanded to do nothing whatever which is not promotive of our real and best interests. This is emphatically the case in the matter now before us; for if it be the sinner's

duty to come to Christ, as we have shown, it is equally his interest, for there is not a want in the sinner but there is a corresponding fulness in the Saviour, as it is written: "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." And again: "Of his fulness," says the apostle, "have we all received, and grace for grace." I repeat it, there is not a want in the sinner but there is a corresponding fulness in our blessed Redeemer. Is the sinner hungry? Let him come to Christ, and he shall be made to partake of the bread of life. Is the sinner thirsty? Let him come to Christ, and he shall be permitted to drink of the wells of salvation. Is the sinner sick? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have life and vigor infused into his soul. Is he naked? Let him come to Christ, and he shall receive a beauteous robe. Is he blind? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have his eyes open to see wondrous things. Is he deaf? Let him come to Christ, and his ears shall be unstopped to hear the voice of uncreated harmony speaking peace to his happy soul. Is the sinner burdened? Let him come to Christ, and his burden shall be taken away. Is the sinner longing for rest? Let him come to Christ, and he shall have sweet repose. Is he trembling under the apprehension of future wrath? Let him come to Christ, and he will find that there is now, therefore, no condemnation to them which are in Christ; for, according to the Scriptures, "Being justified by faith, he shall have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Yes, no matter what may be the sinner's wants or woes, Christ is suited to his case, in all things—only, therefore, let him come to

Christ, and he shall be made rich and happy throughout all time, and throughout all eternity. Assuredly, then, it is the sinner's interest to come to Christ. But,

III. The sinner must come to Christ, or he must perish everlastingly. There is no mistake about this matter; for if Christ, in the economy of redemption, be, as we have shown, our all in all, of course those who are without Christ are without hope; hence the language of the Saviour to his disciples in his last charge, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." This is certainly one of the most awful declarations found in all the Bible; and it assumes a character of peculiar interest and solemnity, when we remember by whom this declaration was originally made, and in what circumstances. By whom was this declaration originally made? Not by an enemy, but by a friend—the tender-hearted Jesus—the sinner's best Friend, and the final Judge of all mankind. And when was this declaration of the Saviour made? In his last interview with his disciples, just as he was about to ascend to heaven, there to plead for those for whom he had so recently shed his most precious blood—yes, in these peculiarly solemn and interesting circumstances he said, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Ah! my brethren, the case is clear—Christ is the sinner's only hope, and the sinner must come to him, or perish forever!

IV. Although it is the sinner's duty to come to Christ, although it is his interest to come to Christ, and al-

though he must come to Christ or perish everlastingly, yet such is the reigning power of sin, and such the deep depravity of the sinner's heart, and such the dominion of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that no man can come to Christ except he be divinely drawn. Some stumble at this doctrine, and even reject it; but this, surely, must be from want of due consideration, for it is certainly both a scriptural and wholesome doctrine. Scriptural: besides our text, which of itself is sufficient to establish the point, we find in the sacred Scriptures numerous passages of similar import. For example, "O, generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things?" Matt. xii. 34. "Without me," says the Saviour, "ye can do nothing." John xv. 5. And, says the apostle Paul, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves." Now here, you will observe, according to one passage, we are not able *to say*, according to another we are not able *to do*, and according to a third we are not able *to think*, anything truly acceptable, as of ourselves. These passages are strongly corroborative of our doctrine; but there are others equally strong, equally conclusive in relation to man's helpless and ruined condition without divine aid. I need only remind you of those well known passages which speak of man's deplorable condition in an unrenewed state. Thus: "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph. ii. 1. Mark, dead in trespasses and sins. Can one who is dead of himself come forth out of his grave of corruption? Again, "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of



God, neither indeed can be." Rom. viii. 7. How can the sinner of himself convert a heart of enmity into a heart of love? Again, "The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." Eccl. viii. 11. The current of the ocean you cannot resist, nor the strong current of a depraved soul. But why multiply passages of Scripture? The doctrine of the sinner's total depravity and helplessness is taught in every part of the sacred volume, and is taken for granted in such passages as these: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself." "Ye are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus;" and, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The doctrine, then, which we advocate, touching the helplessness of the sinner in his unrenewed state, is certainly a scriptural doctrine, and God forbid that we should attempt to explain away our text, which so clearly presents the doctrine.

But we said that the doctrine was not only scriptural, but a wholesome doctrine. Yes, it is the very one which breaks down the pride of the sinner's heart; which causes him to feel that he lies at the mercy of God; and the very thing which, humbling the loftiness and self-sufficiency of his soul, prepares him, and inclines him more earnestly to seek, and more highly to prize help from on high. And I have noticed that the sinner never will come to Christ until he finds that he cannot save himself—never will come to Christ until he finds that he must, positively must, or perish. This is human nature, as it may be seen illustrated in other things.

Here is a man walking along the streets, who is dwell-

ing with great complacency upon the thought that he is worth a million of dollars. One steps up to him and says—"I understand that you owe Mr. A. B. a thousand dollars, and he purposes to exact payment. I am very sorry for you, sir, and am willing to pay the amount." "What do you mean, sir?" replies the millionaire. "Suppose I owe a thousand dollars, I can pay my own debts. Reserve your benevolence for those who may need it." But now, suppose this rich man were a poor man; and suppose, utterly unable to pay his debts, he were pressed by the sheriff for a claim of a thousand dollars, and the amount he must pay, or be imprisoned. Now, if in these circumstances one who was able and willing to relieve him should kindly offer to pay the amount—"O, sir," methinks he would say, "how could I expect such a favor?" And when assured that it was done with great cheerfulness, how thankfully would he accept the kind offer, and say—"This is kindness indeed! O, sir, I owe you a thousand thanks! I want words to express my sense of the great obligations I am under to you!" The application you understand. Whilst the sinner, in the pride of his heart, imagines that he is rich, and increased in goods, and has need of nothing, he undervalues the provisions of gospel grace—rejects the Saviour; but only let him be brought to feel that he owes a thousand talents and has nothing to pay; let him be made sensible that, spiritually, he is wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and O! then, how welcome are the provisions of gospel grace, and how dear is the Saviour of lost sinners! This is the very

idea presented by Christ himself:—"The whole have no need of a physician," says he, "but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Here is a man who has fallen over a precipice. By his fall he is stunned, and has a limb dislocated. Coming to himself, he finds that he is in an evil case. The first thought is to rise up and walk away. He accordingly makes the attempt; but a limb is dislocated, and he sinks down to the earth. He is more sensible of the evil of his case, but the spirit of the man is in him, and he yet, it may be, calls for no help. He makes another effort, more vigorous than the first; his limb again gives way, and down he sinks. We will suppose, now, it is bitter cold; it is snowing fast, and the shades of night are drawing on. It flashes upon him—if no one comes to his relief, there he must perish; that spot will be his grave, and the falling snow will be his winding-sheet. Now, at last, urged by the necessity of the case, he cries for help, aye, loudly and earnestly does he now cry for help. Observe, whilst he thought he could help himself, he called for none; but a full sense of his miserable and helpless condition makes him now heartily willing to accept aid from any one who can relieve him. So it is with the sinner; whilst he imagines that his own arm is strong enough, he is not disposed to lean upon the arm of another; and while he thinks he can save himself, he is not likely to prize a Saviour: hence the doctrine which teaches him that he is a poor, helpless sinner, and that he lies at the mercy of God, is a wholesome doctrine. It is this which humbles the pride of the sin-

ner's heart, and which best disposes him to cry with the Syrophenician woman—"Lord, help me!" and with Peter, sinking in the wave, "Lord, save, or I perish?"

And now let us pause and contemplate the helpless and deplorable condition of the sinner, as one lying low in the ruins of the fall. He is under the reigning power of sin, and he cannot break the reigning power of sin. He is under the curse of God's righteous law, and he cannot roll away the curse of the law. His soul is unfit for heaven, and he cannot make it fit; he is bound over to wrath, and he cannot help himself. Aye, he is in a state of nature and of sin, and his heart must be changed or he can never be saved; and of himself he can no more change his own heart than he can roll a mountain, or heave an ocean. Yes, I repeat **it**, although it is the sinner's duty and interest to come to Christ—and although he must come or perish everlastingly, yet such is the deep depravity of the sinner's heart, such the reigning power of sin in his bosom, and such the dominion of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that no man can come to Christ except he be divinely drawn. O, sinner, believe me, you are lost, ruined, and undone! You lie completely at the mercy of God! and you had better suffer the tortures of martyrdom than do the slightest thing to offend your Maker! Hence the language of the apostle, "Quench not the Spirit." But some one may say, The doctrine of the sinner's helplessness, as stated, destroys all human responsibility. Not so—we insist upon it, if he perishes it is his own fault. I will explain myself. You are a master; you write a let-



ter, and handing it to your servant, you direct him to take it to a certain person on the other side of the river, and bring you back an answer. After a while he returns, and you ask him, Did you take the letter over the river as I directed you? No, Sir. And why? Master, I could not. And why could you not? Why, master, I went to the river; it was deep and rapid, and there was no bridge, and I could not swim, so I did not go over. Did you call for the ferryman? No, Sir. Then go immediately back, and take the letter over, as I commanded you. Now this, I think, is a correct illustration. There is something about the passing of that river which the servant cannot do, no more than he can roll a mountain, or heave an ocean, and yet you do not excuse him. Even so in this matter. The sinner is utterly unable to come to Christ, or change his own heart of himself. There is, so to speak, a broad and deep river between him and heaven, and the sinner cannot swim; but, thank God, there is, if I may so express myself, a heavenly ferryman on the other side. Let him call upon that ferryman—as it is written, “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.” And this reminds me of a remarkable passage in Scripture, “Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me.” Isa. xxvii. 5. Moreover, it falls in precisely with this language of the Eternal God, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help.” Hos. xiii. 9. But this leads to my last general remark:

V. There is a divine drawing; and, thank God, the

doctrine of divine drawing is as clearly revealed as the doctrine of man's helpless and ruined condition by nature. In the sacred volume they are linked together, and what God has joined together let no man put asunder. "No man," says the Saviour, "can come to me except the Father which hath sent me draw him." This language clearly implies that there is such a thing as divine drawing. We may not be able to understand the operation fully, but I believe that a person may be under this system of divine drawing without being fully conscious of it, for oftentimes the influences of the Spirit are as gentle as the dew. There is such a thing as a still small voice, as well as the strong wind which rends the mountains—and the earthquake and the fire. Therefore, although we may not be able to explain the mode of the divine operation, or even recognize it in every case, yet as a fact or doctrine taught in the Bible, there can be no doubt. "Draw me," says the spouse, in the Song of Solomon, "Draw me, and we will run after thee." "I have loved you with an everlasting love," says God, in the book of Jeremiah, "therefore with loving kindnesses have I drawn thee." "And I," says the Saviour, "if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me;" and in Hosea we find this language, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love."

There are various kinds of drawing, both with God and man; and objects are usually drawn in modes and forms suited to the nature of the object drawn. When a log is to be drawn to a certain place, a chain is fastened to it, and by the application of physical force, it is drawn

to the place intended. "I hold in my hand a leaden ball; I let it go, and it falls to the ground, drawn by the power of gravitation, drawn by the operation of a certain law impressed upon inanimate matter by the Creator. Again: This earth moves round the sun once in every twelve months; and how is this accomplished? It is drawn around, in its orbit, by the joint action of two forces, the centripetal and centrifugal. Thus we see that inanimate objects are moved, or drawn, by the application of physical force, and the operation of certain general laws of nature. But man is not inanimate matter; he is a moral and intellectual being; he has a mind, a will, a conscience, and a heart, and he is drawn by another set of means and instrumentalities; he has an understanding, and he can feel the power of an argument; he has a conscience, and he can feel the force of an appeal; moreover, he has certain affections and sensibilities, and these can be wrought upon in various ways; and hence it is written, "I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love." I have seen men going from one place to another, and even hastening to distant and sickly climes, drawn by a love of gain. I have seen wives following their husbands, as it were, all the world over, drawn by affection and a sense of duty; and I have seen persons hurrying away to the post of danger—braving the fury and storm of battle, led on by patriotism, and sometimes purely by ambition, or a desire to twine laurels around their brow. Here is a crowd gathered together in the house of God this day—no physical force was applied, and yet here they are, drawn as effectually as if some irresistible physical force

had been brought to bear upon them. Some drawn by a sense of duty, to worship God; some drawn by curiosity—they heard that there was a religious excitement in the place, a revival of religion—and moreover, that a stranger was expected to preach. Their curiosity was excited, and it has succeeded in bringing them here! And some are present, drawn, as I hope, by a secret desire to receive spiritual benefit. They have been, it may be, under serious impressions for a long time. They desire the salvation of their souls, and having heard that, within a few days past, several persons have been hopefully converted here, they have come, if, peradventure, they may receive the same blessing. Well, they are here, and as effectually drawn as the log spoken of, or the leaden ball to the surface of the earth by the power of gravitation, or the earth around the sun by the action of the two forces already mentioned:—each object drawn, according to its own nature, and in its own way. There is a case of divine drawing in the Scriptures which furnishes a good illustration of the case before us—I refer to the case of the patriarch Jacob, drawn down into Egypt. If, when quietly and pleasantly settled in the land of Canaan, some one had said, Jacob, you must go down into Egypt, methinks he would have promptly said, Not I! Here are my possessions; my flocks and my herds, my children and my grandchildren, are also with me; and here, too, is the grave of Machpelah; here will I live and die, and here will I be gathered unto my fathers. And yet, after all, he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there, and died there—and no vio-



lence was done to his will. And how was this brought about? By a remarkable chain of providences. The patriarch had twelve sons—one, named Joseph, was loved more than they all; and the patriarch made him a coat of many colors, and his brethren envied him, and could not speak peaceably unto him; and Joseph dreamed certain dreams, and told them unto his brethren, and they hated him still more on account of his dreams; and they conspired against him, and sold him to certain Midianite merchantmen, who carried him down into Egypt; and there, after many wonderful events, Joseph was made governor over all the land of Egypt; and there was a famine in the land, and it spread far and wide, and reached the land of Canaan where Jacob was. Hearing that there was corn in Egypt, he sent his sons down into Egypt to obtain supplies—again he sent them, and when they returned the second time, they brought strange tidings to the patriarch's ears, saying, "Thy son Joseph is alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he believed them not. And they told him all the words of Joseph, which he had said unto them: and when he saw the wagons which Joseph had sent to carry him, the spirit of Jacob their father revived: and Israel said, It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die." And accordingly he hastened and went down into Egypt; and sure I am, no violence was done to his will. He never went to any place more cheerfully in all his life; and, verily, nothing but chains, and strong chains, could have prevented him from going

down into Egypt. A powerful magnet was there! The patriarch's long-lost, beloved Joseph was there, and his heart yearned toward his darling child. He longed to see and embrace him once more; all his reluctance to going down into Egypt is removed, and he is fully set upon going now. And Israel said, "It is enough, Joseph my son is yet alive, I will go and see him before I die." Thus, without any violence done to his will, he was drawn down into Egypt with cords of a man, with bands of love. And thus sinners are drawn to Christ. They are, it may be, in the midst of worldly enjoyments and possessions, and are quietly settled upon their lees. They have no concern about their souls nor thought of eternity. In the midst of these scenes of worldly contentment there comes a famine in the land. Afflictions come, heavy, grievous afflictions come; they meet with this loss and that disappointment; this darling child was taken away and that beloved companion is laid in the grave. Ah! the world now begins to lose its charm, and earthly sources of enjoyment are drying up; this child of affliction is brought to see the vanity of the world, the emptiness and insufficiency of all things here below, and the importance of securing a portion better than anything the world can give. In these circumstances, the soul, by the power of the Spirit, is waked up to the high claims of God and eternity; and thus affliction is made instrumental in drawing the soul away from the vanities of the world, and causing it to rest upon Christ as the source of all consolation and all hope. O how many in this way have sought comfort in religion,

and in religion have found it! "It is good for me," says the Psalmist, "that I have been afflicted; for, before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I kept thy law." The famine in the land of Canaan was sore, but it brought about the joy of meeting with Joseph, which joy the patriarch would probably never have had on earth, had there been no famine in the land. So some are by affliction brought to Christ, and made happy in his love, who, without such affliction had in all probability perished in their sin. O how many in the bright realms of bliss, will, upon reviewing the scenes of this lower state, exclaim with gratitude and joy, "Sweet affliction! blessed affliction! which weaned my heart from the world, and led me to my Saviour and my God!"

But other means are also made effectual by the Spirit of God in bringing about the same blessed result. The sinner, perhaps by the instrumentality of some awakening sermon, or some religious book, or some friendly letter, or some zealous friend, or it may be, some sacramental or death-bed scene, is brought, like the Psalmist, to think upon his ways, and turn his feet to the divine testimonies. His understanding is enlightened, and he is brought to see the reasonableness of the claims of his Maker, and the value of his own soul. His conscience is troubled, and he is brought to see that he is a sinner, and justly condemned by God's righteous law. Moreover, he has a heart, and appeals have been made to it, drawn from the goodness of God shown in ten thousand things, and the love of Christ in dying for our lost and ruined race. And, it may be, the law has spoken out

its terrors in thunder to the soul. In short, arguments, appeals, motives, and considerations of various kinds are brought to bear upon the man with great power. The more he thinks, the more anxious he becomes. He sees that he has sinned against a holy God; that he has broken God's righteous law, and has incurred its dreadful penalty; that he can make no atonement for his sins; and that, without a Saviour, he must perish for ever. In these circumstances, Christ is held out to him in the gospel as one who is both able and willing to save all that will come unto him. Light flows in upon the sinner's mind, his heart is touched by the Spirit of God, his will is subdued, and he is both persuaded and enabled to embrace Jesus Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel. No violence is done to the sinner's will. Interest, duty, love, all lead him to the feet of his blessed Saviour, whilst he cries out—"Lord, save, or I perish!"—"Here, Lord, I give myself away; 'tis all that I can do." Or,

"Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer,

Welcome to this heart of mine:

Lord, I make a full surrender:

Every power and thought be thine,

Thine entirely—

Through eternal ages thine."

Thus the sinner is drawn, sweetly, powerfully, effectually drawn to Christ. And, so far from any violence having been done to his will, his whole heart is in the matter. He goes to Christ as freely, and cheerfully, and joyfully as a hungry man goes to a banquet, or a thirsty man to a pool of water; or rather, as the manslayer into



the city of refuge—or he that is exposed to the peltings of a pitiless storm enters a place of shelter.

And now, my dear, unconverted friends, forget not the things which you have heard this evening. Remember, it is your duty to come to Christ; it is your interest to come to Christ; and you absolutely must come to Christ, or you must perish forever. And O, remember that whilst these things are so, yet such is the deep depravity of the sinner's heart, and such the reigning power of sin, and such the dominion of the world, the flesh, and the devil, that no man can come to Christ unless he be divinely drawn. O, you who are now under divine influences—you who are under conviction of sin, and tremble for the salvation of your souls—and you who are sensible that the world cannot make you happy, and who sigh for something better than the world can give, remember you are now under the influence of a divine drawing; beware how you fight against your convictions; beware how you trifle with your serious impressions; beware how you resist these heavenly drawings, lest they cease, and you be left to yourselves—and what then? Your case becomes hopeless! you are lost to all eternity! O, quench not the Spirit! Beware, lest, grieving the Spirit, he cease to move upon your heart, and you become hardened. And O, think what it is to be hardened! It is to have all the moral and religious sensibilities of the soul deadened. It is to become reckless and unconcerned. It is to be habitually in such a frame of mind that there are no compunctions for the past, no apprehensions for the future—deaf to all the

calls of mercy, stupid under all the means of grace. It is to be habitually in such a frame of mind, that all promises and threatenings are alike disregarded, and all motives and appeals equally unavailing. As the dead man feels not the burning of the coal lodged in his bosom, nor the flinty rock the softening influences of the showers of heaven, even so it is with him whose heart is hardened. He may be in the sanctuary, but the most pungent discourses make no impression. He may witness sacramental scenes, but they inspire no solemnity—even funeral rites and the burial of the dead affect him not. Spread before him the glories of heaven, and he is not allured; point him to the torments of the damned, and he is not alarmed. Lead him to Calvary, and talk to him about the love of Jesus and his dying agonies, and he is as insensible as steel. Friends may entreat, but he heeds not; ministers may warn, but he repents not. Others may feel, but he feels not; others may weep, but he weeps not. He is hard as rock; or say,

“Some alarming shock of fate  
Strikes through his wounded heart,  
The sudden dread! another moment, and alas!  
—where past the shaft no trace is found,  
As from the wing no scar the sky retains,  
The parted wave no furrow from the keel.”

The rock may be rived, but it is rock still: it may be broken into a thousand fragments, but there is no softening yet. And so it is with the sinner, when, the drawings of heaven resisted and the Spirit quenched, the sinner is left to himself, and becomes incorrigible and

hardened—past feeling and past hope! Let me be poor, let me be a bondman, let me be a beggar, but let me not, given up of the Spirit, be a hardened sinner! O my God, cast me not away from thy presence, neither take thine Holy Spirit from me. Fellow sinner, take care what you do just now. You are in solemn circumstances, and great interests are at stake! Many of you are under the influence of divine drawings now, and some, perhaps, who are not fully aware of it. O remember,

“God’s Spirit will not always strive  
With hardened, self-destroying men;  
You who persist his love to grieve  
May never hear his voice again!”

O then, let me exhort you, one and all, to make light of sacred things no more; they are too serious to be trifled with. Heaven and hell—eternal life and eternal death! What more rousing themes can be presented to the mind of man? O, if any of you have never yet come to Christ, let me entreat you to come this day—put off the great concern no longer. It is dangerous to delay. Your day of grace may close when you least expect it. Only one sin more, and the sentence may go forth against you, “Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone!” Yes, only one sin more, and divine drawings, in your case, may cease forever! Here is a beam extending over a precipice, a man may take several steps upon that beam, but there is one point upon which, if he steps, he is gone! A cord may sustain a certain weight—add one ounce to that weight and the cord breaks! O, then, beware how you take another step in the road to death!

beware how you add another sin to those already committed; and beware how you slight this, which may be your last—last call! Fellow man, eternity is at the door. You need a Saviour. There are influences now in operation to draw you to this Saviour. For heaven's sake—for your dear soul's sake, resist not these influences. O, yield, and may you this day find Christ precious to your soul—even the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely! Amen.

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## SERMON XI.

### VAIN EXCUSES.

And they all with one consent began to make excuse.—LUKE xiv. 18.

WHY, my brethren, are there so few real Christians amongst us? The fact I assume, for I suppose it will not be denied. Should the angel of death pass through the length and breadth of our land, and sweep into the grave all the careless, and all the prayerless; and return and sweep into the grave all the intemperate and all the profane; and return and take away every scoffer, and every hypocrite—and return, in short, and take away every impenitent and unrenewed sinner, what silence would reign in our streets! what solitude would exist in our dwellings! and how thin would be this congregation! Why this—why so few real Christians? Doubtless there are many reasons; such as pride, worldly-



mindfulness, and a want of thought; but certainly, one reason is this, a self-justifying spirit, prompting the impenitent to make vain excuses. This morning I design to examine some of the excuses which are commonly urged by the unconverted, for neglecting to obey the gospel call. Before I take them up, however, I would observe, that there is a general evidence against their soundness, arising from some remarkable circumstances:—their number—their easy relinquishment—and the representation which our Saviour gives of them in the parable whence we have derived our text. Their number: When a person is asked to do a thing which he does not choose to do, and yet desires to keep up fair appearances, he is very apt to make a great many excuses, as if he would make up in number what is wanting in the value of his excuses. Precisely so with regard to the sinner. Here is an unconverted man, and I say to him, My dear sir, I am astonished that a man of your good sense should neglect the salvation of your soul. Certainly you must admit it to be a matter of great importance, why then do you neglect it? He makes one excuse; before he allows me time to meet that excuse, he abandons it for another, and that for another; and thus he goes on, retreating, through the whole round of his excuses. This, I say, is a very suspicious circumstance: if that man had a single excuse, which he really believed to be substantial, would he not hold it fast? but not having any in which he has much confidence, he adds one to another, as if, as already said, he would make up in number what is wanting in the

value of his excuses. Again: Here is another man; he has twenty reasons for neglecting to obey the gospel call. Let some alarming disease seize upon him, and he forgets one half of them—let death look him in the face, he forgets the other half! O, these shadowy excuses! If they cannot stand in the presence of disease and death, how can they stand in the presence of the final Judge of all mankind?

But the representation which our Saviour gives of them is conclusive against the soundness of all the sinner's excuses. A certain man, says he, made a great supper, and sent his servant, at supper-time, to say to them that were bidden, "Come, for all things are now ready: and they all, with one consent, began to make excuse." And pray, what were these excuses? "The first said, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused." Observe! He was invited to come at supper-time! Now supper-time I should think rather an indifferent time to see the ground; and yet no time but supper-time will suit him to see the ground. "And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee, have me excused." Now, if he had bought the oxen, the bargain was closed—at any rate, any planter, any man in his senses, knows full well that supper-time is not the best time to prove oxen—yet no time can he fix upon to prove these oxen but supper-time. "And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." Where was the man invited to go—to a funeral? No! To hear a dull lecture? No! Where

then? To a feast! And where could a new-married couple go with greater propriety, than to a feast? And yet this is his excuse—"I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come." This is a very remarkable parable. It was uttered by our Lord, who knew what was in man; and knew full well how to represent the true character of the sinner's excuses, and here he does it to the life and admiration, in this truly remarkable parable. And now, God helping me, I will endeavor this morning to show that the excuses commonly urged by the sinner for neglecting to obey the gospel call, are not a whit better than they are represented to be in this, as I have said, truly remarkable parable.

I. The Bible is so full of mystery I cannot understand it. The Bible so full of mystery! Just as if the Bible was nothing in the world but a bundle of riddles! No plain doctrine, no plain precept, no plain promise, no plain threatening—nothing plain! Is this ingenious? Is this true? The Bible says, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Is not this plain? The Bible says, "He that believeth not shall be damned." Would the sinner wish any thing plainer than this? The Bible says, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief of sinners." Now this is not only remarkably beautiful, but it is remarkably plain; even the child of six years of age can understand it perfectly well; and yet the man says, the Bible is so full of mystery I cannot understand it! Ah! we all see it clearly. It amounts to this: I have bought a piece of ground, and

I must needs go and see it at supper-time. But another comes forward with this excuse :

II. Religion is a gloomy thing, it has no charms for me. Thank God, there are many, both in heaven and earth, who think very differently. I never heard that religion ever abridged one's happiness in health, or saddened one's heart in sickness, or lay heavy upon one's soul in death. But I think that I have heard that the want of religion extorted a cry of agony from the dying sinner. Religion a gloomy thing! has no charms for you! Look at the young convert, how his eyes sparkle! how every feature beams with joy! Hark, how his tongue breaks out in songs of praise :

“When God revealed his gracious name,  
And changed my mournful state,  
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,  
The grace appeared so great!

“Great is the work, my neighbors cried,  
And owned the power divine;  
Great is the work, my heart replied,  
And be the glory Thine!”

But suppose there be no rapture, the young convert has a sweet complacency in Christ—a heavenly calm, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, and which he would not exchange for “all that the world calls good or great.” It must be so, for what does religion do for us? It gives us a scriptural assurance that our sins are all forgiven for Jesus' sake. Is there any thing in this to sadden the heart? It gives us the scrip-



tural assurance that the great God of the universe is our reconciled God and Father in Christ. Is there any thing in this to damp the warm feelings of the soul? It gives us, moreover, the blessed assurance that heaven is our home; that angels are to be our future companions; nay, that we ourselves are to be as angels in the world to come. I confess I can see nothing in this to sink the spirits, or spread any thing like gloom over the mind. Ah! but you say, If I become a Christian I shall have to give up all the pleasures of the world. You are called upon to give up no pleasures that are really innocent; and can you wish to indulge in those which are not? Here also it must be remembered that true religion is a renovating principle. It changes the heart—the whole current of the soul—so that a person even in fashionable life, or in the full indulgence of sin of any kind, when soundly converted, can give up sinful pleasures without a sigh, and take up religious duties with real joy; for, says the Saviour, “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.” And again, “There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God’s sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting.” So that, in relation to real pleasure, as well as in relation to other matters, it may truly be said, “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.” Yes, it is even so, and the verdict of thousands and millions is this :

“’Tis religion that must give  
Sweetest pleasure whilst we live;  
’Tis religion must supply  
Solid comfort when we die.”

O, worldings! believe me, you are wrong! You are seeking happiness in the world. It is but a beggarly portion for an immortal soul. Has it ever yet made you happy? No! and it never will, it never can. And let these words sink down into your ears—you will never know what true happiness is until you are converted; and, if never converted, you will never know it, world without end. But suppose that religion did make one sad and gloomy on earth (which we utterly deny) would it not be better, after all, to be a sad and gloomy child of God than a thoughtless and merry child of the devil? Would it not be better to go to heaven in a thorny way, than to go to hell in a way all strewed with flowers! Then what becomes of the second excuse? It amounts to this—I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them at supper-time!

III. A third excuse is this: If I am elected to be saved I shall be saved, do what I will; and if not, I cannot, do what I may. This is the sheet-anchor of many, their stronghold, that upon which they are disposed to rest with more confidence perhaps than any other; and after all, if I mistake not, it amounts to this: I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. It is but an excuse, and not good, for two reasons—(1.) Because it involves an absurdity; and, (2.) Because it is not acted upon in cases exactly similar.

(1.) It involves an absurdity, for it amounts to this: What is to come to pass will come to pass, whether we have any agency in the matter or not. Now the absurdity lies here—it supposes the accomplishment of an event, without the very means by which the event is to be accomplished. As if I should say, If I am to go to London, why, certainly, I shall go to London, whether I embark on board a vessel or not; or, if we are to have a pleasant day to-morrow, assuredly we shall have a pleasant day to-morrow, whether the sun rise or not. Absurdity, you perceive, is stamped upon the face of the thing. Those who reach London must pass over the ocean, and if there be a pleasant day to-morrow the sun must rise. So those who are elected to everlasting salvation, as the *end*, must be prepared for it by the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as the necessary *means* for the attainment of that end. God has connected the end and the means, and what God hath joined together let not man put asunder.

(2.) The excuse urged is not a good one, because it is not acted upon in cases very similar. Does this planter say—If I am to have a crop this year, I shall have a crop this year, whether I cultivate my grounds or not. I suspect he does not say this. Does this other man say—If I am to be rich, I shall be rich whether I make any effort or not. Certainly he does not say so. Does the sick man say—If I am to get well, I shall get well, whether I take any medicine or not. O no! he does not say so; and yet all these might say so, for I have heard of grounds producing crops without any cultivation; and I

have heard of persons becoming rich without any effort. Aye, and I have heard of sick persons getting well without any medicine, but never have I heard of man or woman finding the straight gate without seeking it, or getting into the narrow way without effort. And here I would remark that there is a passage of Scripture just in point. Job, speaking of man's temporal life, or the life of the body, says, "His days are determined, the number of his months are with thee; thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass." Job xiv. 5. Here we are taught that the life of man is in God's hand; that according to the divine purpose, some die young, and some are elected to old age. In this matter God acts as a sovereign God, and so also in the other case, and

"Not Gabriel asks the reason why,  
Nor God the reason gives."

And what, then, does the sick man say? My days are determined, I will send for no physician; the number of months is with him; I will take no medicine: he has appointed the bounds of my life, that I cannot pass, I will therefore do nothing. If I am to die of this disease, I must die, do what I will; and if not, I cannot, do what I may. Does he say this? No! he does not, but rather he reasons thus: I know that God, as an infinite being, must know all things, and of course must know the day of my death; but I know also, and I have frequently observed, that there is a connection between the means and the end. I have seen persons dying, evidently for want of medical aid, and I have seen some persons at



the point of death, restored to health, evidently by medical skill. This is enough for me; secret things belong unto God. I see that in all things there is a manifest and close connection between the means and the end. This is sufficient. Now this is all perfectly rational and right in the one case; why should it not be acted upon in the other? The grand reason I suspect is this: the sinner had rather cavil than repent—much rather make excuse than give up sin. But while I am upon the subject of election, or the decrees of God, take a Jewish story:—"Rabbi Hillel sat in the chair of Moses; his fame for wisdom and sanctity was spread far and wide. If the Messiah were known to be upon the earth, Rabbi Hillel would have been taken for the Messiah; but every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Rabbi Hillel wished to understand the mystery of the divine decrees. To prepare himself for meditation so deep and profound, he spent two days in fasting and in prayer; on the third, he ascended the top of Mount Carmel; there his gigantic mind endeavored to grasp the mighty theme, but his thoughts rolled back upon his breast like stones from the top of Gerizim. At length, wearied by his fruitless inquiries, by chance he turned his eye toward a spot of earth where something appeared to be moving. It was a mole, that having heard that there was such a thing as light, and forgetting the weakness of its own organs of vision, longed to look upon the sun in all its brightness and glory. Scarcely, however, had he left his subterranean abode, when, dazzled by the overwhelming effulgence of the sun, he wished himself

back again; but before he could effect his retreat, an eagle hovering over, flew down, seized the mole with her talons, and flew over the valley of the son of Hinnom. 'Blessed be the God of my fathers!' exclaimed Rabbi Hillel, as he beheld the scene that passed before his eyes—'Blessed be the God of my fathers, who by this little incident has taught his servant wisdom—not to be too anxious to explore mysteries which are too deep for human comprehension.' "

My brethren, listen! The grand inquiry for such creatures as we are, is, not whether we can understand all parts of the scheme of redemption, but whether there is such a scheme, whereby the sinner may be saved. Not whether two or three doctrines in the Bible are hard to be understood, but whether the Bible itself, which contains these doctrines, be the word of God? Not whether we are of the elect or reprobate, but whether we are sinners, and need the salvation of Christ? For it is remarkable, the very same Bible which asserts the sovereignty of God, also asserts the free agency of man. The very same Bible which says—whom God foreknew, them he also predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son, also says—"Whosoever will, let him take of the waters of life freely." Prying into deep mysteries may do us as much injury as gazing upon the sun did the mole, whose organs of vision could not bear the splendors of that bright orb of day. Let us, then, never perplex ourselves with those things which are too deep for us to fathom; but let us bless God that, according to the Scriptures, "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all

acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, even the chief." Yes, instead of perplexing ourselves with things too high and deep for us, let us endeavor by grace divine to obtain an experimental knowledge of those plainer doctrines which are able to make us wise unto salvation; able to bring us to the world of light and glory, where we shall no more complain of intellectual darkness, for there shall be no night there! But another excuse frequently urged is this:

IV. Professors of religion are no better than other persons. Now this is either true, or it is not true. If true, these professors of religion are not Christians; for, if Christians, they must have the Spirit of Christ; and who will say that a man may have the Spirit of Christ and yet be no better than those who have not? But even admit that professors of religion are no better than other people; suppose they are all a set of hypocrites, not excepting your own mother, what of that? Will that make the doctrines of the Bible less true, the precepts less binding, the promises less encouraging, or the threatenings less alarming? Suppose they are all hypocritical, hollow-hearted professors, will that blot out this passage of Scripture, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" or this, "He that believeth not, shall be damned;" or this, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." You stumble at the inconsistent walk of professors of religion; and alas, that you should have so much occasion! but their sins cannot justify you in the day of accounts: even their righteousness cannot do it—

how much less their sins. You talk about the inconsistent walk of professors of religion, and did not the Saviour predict the very thing? "Wo to the world because of offences," says he, "it must needs be that offences come, but wo to that man by whom the offence cometh." Leave them in the hands of God; he will by no means suffer them to go unpunished; but, if you be a sinner too—dying in that state, is there not to be a reckoning with you also? It is admitted that inconsistent, hollow-hearted professors of religion are stumbling-blocks in the way of salvation; but if there were stumbling-blocks in your way to a golden mine, would those stumbling-blocks keep you from rushing to that golden mine? And is not the salvation of your precious soul worth infinitely more than all the treasures of a golden mine? Ah! my friend, believe me, your excuse is not a good one. It amounts to this—I have bought a piece of ground, and must needs go and see it at supper-time! But

V. A fifth excuse is this: "There are so many different denominations of Christians, I do not know which is the right one." So many different denominations! There are, perhaps, one hundred more than you ever dreamed of, unless you have read largely upon the subject—and what of that? Does that make your soul less valuable, or a Saviour less needful, or heaven less glorious, or hell less terrible, or eternity less awful? So many different denominations! And do not most of them agree in essential matters? The apostle says, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Mark, he does not say, grace be with all them



that think alike in every matter—for however desirable this may be, it is by no means essential to salvation—but “grace be with all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” And again, he says: “As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God;” that is, as many as bring forth the fruits of a new and regenerate nature, peace be upon them. So many different denominations of Christians! They are like the different colors which constitute the beauteous rainbow upon the body of the dark cloud—like the different parts in music, the tenor and the counter, the treble and the base—like the radii of a circle of which Jesus Christ is the centre, and the nearer they come to the centre, the nearer they come to each other!—Or rather, may I not say, that they are like the different companies which compose the grand army in time of war. Suppose the powers of Europe should combine against the liberties of our beloved country; and sending over their multitudinous and well disciplined troops, should threaten to sweep away our republican institutions. The fact is announced and war proclaimed by our federal government—what a marshalling of the forces for battle! On every hand you hear the sound of the heart-stirring drum, and the trumpet of war, calling the freemen of America to the tented field. What a scene is presented! See, on yonder mountain wave, there floats the gallant navy of my country, prepared with her thunder to repel the invading foe, or sink into the ocean’s depths! And see, on the land, how they come, how they crowd in from all parts of this great confederacy! Are they all horse-

men, are they all infantry, are they all riflemen, are they all artillerists? Have they all the same weapons of war, have they all the same uniform? What an endless variety prevails, and yet what unity. This great army of American patriots is composed of many, very many companies. Each company has its own officers, its own regimentals, its own weapons of war, and its own mode of warfare; aye, and each company has its own little flag, too. But see! the star spangled banner of my country waves over them all! Yes, the star spangled banner of my country waves over yonder gallant navy, upon the mountain wave, prepared to repel the invading foe, or sink into the ocean's depths! The star spangled banner of my country waves over the land army in all its variety, prepared to repel the invading foe, or bite the earth in death! Even so, what are the different denominations of real Christians but the different companies which compose the grand army of Immanuel, the sacramental host of God's elect? Each denomination, so to speak, may have its own officers, regimentals, and weapons of war; aye, and each may have its own little flag, too. But, mark! the blood-stained banner of the cross—the bond of union for every pious heart, waves over them all! Let the sinner, then, do what he ought to have done long time ago; let him repent of his sins, and yield his heart to the blessed Redeemer; and, although not falling precisely into our ranks, I for one, (and I am sure I speak the sentiments of very many,) I for one, can most cordially give him the right hand of fellowship, and say, Is Christ precious to your soul? Does his banner wave over you?

God speed thee, my brother, in thy holy warfare! God speed thee in thy journey to the skies! Press on! We differ in some things, but we agree in all essential matters—we differ in some things, but we are all members of the same household of faith, bought with the same precious blood, sanctified by the same Divine Spirit, and all passing through one beauteous gate to one eternal home! Press on, my brother, we shall soon meet in heaven, and there see eye to eye; shall soon meet in our own Father's house above, and there salute each other as fellow immortals, and as brethren redeemed! And now what has become of the excuse about so many different denominations? It has vanished into air, it is frivolous, it amounts to this: "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them" at supper-time! I pray thee have me excused. In other words, it speaks this language—I don't choose to go! But the same person, it may be, brings forward this excuse:

VI. "What harm have I done? I do not think that I am any great sinner. I have injured no man. I have defrauded no man. I have murdered no man. I am not covetous, I am not profane, I am not a gambler, nor a drunkard. I pay all my just debts; I am kind to the poor; I go to church; and I subscribe to many of the benevolent and charitable institutions of the day." Well, be it so. Suppose you are what the world calls a good kind of a moral man; and do you ask what harm have you done, and whom have you injured? You have failed to love the Lord your God; and is this no harm? You have turned your back upon a dying Saviour, and

have even trampled upon his precious blood; and is this no harm? You have grieved the Spirit of God, and it may be, have broken many solemn vows; and is this no harm? You have not remembered the Sabbath day, to keep it holy; you have not improved your great privileges; you have wasted much of your precious time; you have indulged evil thoughts, harbored rebellious feelings, encouraged improper desires—and is this no harm? You have sinned against light and against love; against the law and against the gospel; against the admonitions of God's word, the strivings of the Divine Spirit, and against the remonstrances of your own conscience. You are guilty of sins of omission and of commission; sins of thought, of word, and of deed, and that times and ways without number. In short, the charge brought against Belshazzar, on the very night in which he was slain, may be brought against you: "The God in whose hands thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified." And now, upon thy soul the inscription is written—"Tekel, thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." And yet do you say, What harm have I done, and whom have I injured? O, could you see your sins as God sees them, or as they are likely to come rolling over your soul in a dying hour, or certainly in the great judgment-day, methinks, instead of saying, What harm have I done, and whom have I injured—you would say, Innumerable evils have compassed me about; my sins have gone over my head as a cloud; they are a burden too heavy for me; and with the publican you would cry, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." O, re-



member that it is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." And whilst you are relying upon your own righteousness, remember also the words of the holy apostle, "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Your excuse, then, is a vain one; it will not stand. Be assured God, your Judge, will not receive it. It is one of those refuges of lies spoken of in the Scriptures which the hail shall sweep away. Then give it up; why should you hold fast to an excuse which you know to be not a good one? But the excuses of the sinner are not yet exhausted, for he says:

VII. "God is too merciful to punish sinners." Now to determine this, we must have recourse not to our own imaginations, but to the sacred volume; for, aside from the Scriptures, we would literally know nothing at all about such matters. The Bible then—the blessed Bible! "This is the judge that ends the strife, where wit and reason fail." And now, to determine the case before us, we need to inquire only in relation to two things: (1.) What has God said? and (2.) What has God done? (1.) What has God said? He has said, it is true, that he is long-suffering, abundant in goodness and in truth; but he has also said, that he will by no means clear the guilty. He has said, it is true, that he has no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but he has also said, if the wicked turn not, he will whet his sword, and his hand will take hold on vengeance. He has said many things most consoling to the penitent and broken-hearted sinner, but upon all others he denounces terrible things.

"Wo," says he, "to the wicked, it shall be ill wth him." And again, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And again, "He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." Declarations like these, you know, my dear friends, are very common in the sacred volume, and you cannot believe they were intended to be mere vain words. Let the sinner then seriously consider what God has said, and what is before him. God is merciful. Yes, and we are glad to add, he is rich in mercy—his mercy is over all his works, and endureth forever; but remember also, "God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent." "Has he said it, and shall he not do it?" "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven!" (2.) But what has God done? Expelling rebel angels from heaven, he cast them down to hell! Driving fallen man from paradise, he subjected him to death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The antediluvians were God's creatures, and yet, being sinners, the flood came and swept them all away. The inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah were God's creatures, and yet, on account of their sins, you know very well what befel them. The Lord rained upon them fire and brimstone out of heaven; and, according to the apostle, they were set forth as ensamples, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. Let not the sinner, then, who continues in sin, expect to escape the righteous judgment of Almighty God, for it is written, "Though hand join in hand, yet shall not the wicked go unpunished." And again—"Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for what-

soever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is a way, thank God, in which salvation may come to the sinner as a flowing stream. Through the great atoning sacrifice of Christ, God can pardon the repenting sinner, and yet maintain the honors of his throne; but, let the sinner reject the plan of salvation proposed in the gospel, and he rejects mercy herself—and mercy thus scorned and rejected, will herself grasp the sword, and turn executioner. The wrath of the Lamb! O who can bear it! But another comes forward and says:

VIII. "Really, sir, I have not time to attend to the matter." And what was time chiefly given for, but to prepare for eternity. Here is a servant sent upon an important errand, but, gathering flowers and pebbles by the way, he lingers and says, I have not time to go upon the errand. Here is a planter; the time for putting his seed into the ground is come, but his grounds are not ploughed, nor are his fences up; and, sporting with his hounds, or amusing himself in his garden, he pleads he has not time to sow his fields. Not time! You have time to attend to your bodies—why not time to attend to your souls? "O! Mr. Ryland, I have not time to attend to such matters." Observe, this was the language of a certain member of Congress to the chaplain of Congress, at the time the man of God urged him to attend to the great interests of his undying soul. "O! sir," said he, "I have not time to attend to such matters." Men of the world, listen! This member of Congress was a lawyer. He made, as I am told, twenty thousand dollars a year by his practice as a lawyer. He was a senator—one of the

most brilliant stars which ever coruscated in the senate chamber. Moreover he was an orator, a finished orator, if there ever was one in this land of ours. His tongue was the tongue of the learned, it dropped manna; persuasion dwelt upon his lips. All who heard him were charmed with his silver-toned voice, and the heart-stirring strains of his enrapturing eloquence. When it was known that he was to speak in the senate chamber, it was difficult to keep a quorum in the other house; and on a certain occasion, when he had made a most brilliant speech on the Missouri question, John Randolph, (certainly a judge of eloquence, if of nothing else)—yes, John Randolph, in perfect admiration exclaimed, “I had rather be the author of that speech than Emperor of all the Russias.” This is the man, the lawyer, the statesman—the great and brilliant man, who, when urged to take care of his soul, replied, “O, Mr. Ryland, I have not time to attend to such matters.” Ah me! “What shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!” This very man, only a few weeks after, was shrouded and laid in the grave! And now, as he is sinking in the cold embrace of death, the same chaplain comes to his bed-side, and for the last time admonishes him to take care of his soul. What does he now say? “O Mr. Ryland, the world has ruined me!” Remember, I do not draw aside the curtain; I will not pronounce concerning his doom; but on the supposition that his last words were true, “the world has ruined me!” on that supposition, where is he now? In the dark world of wo! And what is it to him, this moment, that he was once able to amass twenty thousand



dollars a year by his practice as a lawyer? Alas! now he has not silver and gold enough to purchase one poor drop of water to cool his tongue, tormented in penal flames! And what is it to him, this moment, that he was once the most brilliant star that ever glittered in the senate chamber of the United States? Alas! this star is fallen! Its brilliancy is quenched in the gloom of the pit that has no bottom! And what is it to him now, that once his tongue was the tongue of the learned; that it dropped manna; that persuasion dwelt upon his lips, and that all who heard him were charmed with the strains of his surpassing eloquence? Does he speak? It is in groans of anguish and shrieks of despair—methinks he cries out in the agony of a lost soul, “I have lost my day, I have lost my soul! The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and I am not saved!” You have not time to attend to your spiritual interests! What says the Saviour, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” This is to be sought as an object of the first importance, and in the first place; and for this a good reason is assigned in another place, “What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?”

IX. “I know that religion is important: I do not intend to neglect it, but there is time enough yet.”—You admit that religion is important, and yet you seem disposed to attend to anything and everything else first! You admit that religion is important; we are pleased that you make this admission, but better proof of your sense of its importance would give us more pleasure still. But you say, you do

not intend to neglect it. Are you not mistaken? Let us test this matter. Is it your purpose to attend to it this day, to-morrow, the next week, the next month, or the next year? No, you say, you have not exactly formed any resolution of this kind. Then it seems you are quite reconciled to the idea of neglecting it at least for one day, one month, and even for one year! O, there is something awful in this! Something to make one shudder! It speaks this language: Terrible as the loss of the soul is, I am willing to expose myself to the peril of it, for at least one year more! But you say, you have time enough yet. What if you should die this night! And what security have you that you shall not?—I am free to confess I do not think it likely that you will die to-night, but it is quite possible, and the bare possibility of your dying in your present state, this night, surely it is enough to take away sleep from your eyes, and slumber from your eyelids! I recollect when I was yet unconverted. I was sometimes afraid to go to sleep at night, lest I might never wake up in this world any more! And I recollect making a remark of this kind one evening at the house of a friend in Texas, some years ago, and it was blessed to the hopeful conversion of one precious soul. Suppose you think upon the matter; it may, by grace divine, be the means of saving you from going down to the pit. Remember, your breath is in your nostrils, and God may stop that breath any moment. But why do you think that there is time enough yet? Are you young? Some younger than you are now sleeping in their graves. Are you in strong health? Ah, me! some not only in youth,

but in strong health, have been cut down, and that without warning. O, I could mention so many cases that have fallen under my own observation, and some, too, of a most melancholy character. And am I wrong? Some cases of a similar kind have been known to you. "In the midst of life we are in death." O, how many illustrations of this fact occur every year, and in every place! And do you still say, "There is time enough yet!" Had you seen Mr. Loomis, of Bangor, ascend the pulpit on a certain new-year Sabbath, you would have thought it probable that he would ascend his pulpit many Sabbaths yet to come. Alas! he had entered it for the last time. He arose and took his text; it was this: "This year thou shalt die." He made a few remarks, turned pale, and sank down in his pulpit a lifeless corps. His pulpit was his death-chamber, and his gown his winding-sheet. "Time enough yet!" If you had seen Judge Boling rise up in the hall of the House of Representatives a few years ago, and address the Speaker, you might have expected him to make many more speeches in that hall of legislation; but, alas! he was then making his last speech. "Mr. Speaker," said he: and while addressing the chair, the angel of death touched him, and he fell down a dead man! "Time enough yet!" If you had seen Colonel Bowie, some eighteen or twenty years since, enter a certain church in the city of Washington, you would little have thought that he had entered the church of God for the last time; but so it was. While the man of God in the pulpit was preaching to the people the unsearchable riches of Christ, all who were present heard a groan! It

was his last. Colonel Bowie fell upon the floor and immediately expired! His friends gathered around and carried him out a dead man. And O, who can forget the sudden death of Emmet, of Harper, and of Clinton; and especially the tragical and most melancholy affair on board the Princeton, when two of the heads of the departments of government, with several other distinguished individuals, were in a moment launched into eternity? Ah! my brethren, we can compute the length of any natural day, but not how long any man is going to live on earth; we can tell precisely when the natural sun will set, but not when the sun of life will go down. Sometimes the period of man's life is lengthened like a summer's day; sometimes it is made short as a day in midwinter. Sometimes the sun of life goes down at noon, and sometimes while it is yet early in the morning. Sometimes it fades away like the fleecy cloud on the azure sky; sometimes it appears like the meteor flashing and coruscating in the heavens, and then in a moment quenched and gone out.

“Our life contains a thousand springs,  
And fails if one be gone;  
Strange that a harp of thousand strings  
Should keep in tune so long.”

“Boast not thyself of to-morrow,” said one who uttered many wise sayings; “Boast not thyself of to-morrow, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” When such mighty interests are at stake, none should presume upon the future. “Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer.”

Once more: “I must wait God's time.” Some really



seem to be waiting for miracles. I know very well that Saul of Tarsus was miraculously arrested on his way to Damascus; but let not every sinner expect miracles on his way to Damascus. But does not David say, "My soul waiteth for the Lord"? Certainly he said so, but did he not also add, "More than they that watch for the morning"? How remarkable the expression, "More than they that watch for the morning;" that is, more than the nurse in the chamber of the sick man, who looks out at the window, and longs for the breaking of the day; or more than the sentinel in a damp cold night looks towards the east, and longs for the rising of the morning star. Can you say that you do wait for the Lord more than they who do thus long for the breaking of the day and the rising of the morning star? You are waiting God's time. Is this really so? Then, be it thus; but remember, the present is his time, as it is written, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." And again, "Choose ye this day whom you will serve." And again, "To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

And now, my friends, in closing, hear me! O, do attend to what I say! Only a little while, and we shall have done with the scenes of this transitory state—only a little while, and our race will have been run, our probation closed, and our character and destiny sealed forever! Our eternal all is at stake! Let there be no trifling in this matter; bring near the scenes which are certainly before us. Suppose you were now upon a dying bed, how would your excuses appear? Suppose this was the

very moment of your leaving the world—pulse quivering, blood freezing, heart-strings breaking, soul panting, shuddering, launching away—how would your excuses appear? But change the scene. Suppose this were the great judgment-day, and all its tremendous scenes now passing before you—trump sounding, dead rising, God descending, angels shouting, devils wailing—in these solemn circumstances how would your excuses appear? If your excuses are good, my counsel is, hold them fast. Do not let the minister take them from you; do not let your mother take them from you; let no one take them from you. If you are sure they are good, I repeat it, hold them fast; carry them with you all along the journey of life; carry them with you down into the grave, and up to the judgment bar; plead them before your Maker. If your excuses are good, God is just, and he will sustain them. But if they are not good, (and is there not a misgiving in your heart, even now—aye, a conviction that they are not good?) I change my counsel altogether. If not good, do not hold them fast; I beseech you, do not carry them with you through the journey of life! Do not, I entreat you, as you value your precious souls, do not carry them with you down to the grave nor up to the judgment bar, lest God look upon you, and you wither away—lest God frown upon you, and you perish forever!

## SERMON XII.

## IDLENESS REPROVED.

And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?—MATTHEW XX. 6.

It was foretold of our blessed Saviour, that he should open his mouth in parables, and we find that it was oftentimes in this way that he instructed his friends and silenced his enemies. The parable of the householder, like that of the prodigal son, is of a national character, and was primarily designed to represent the Jewish and the Gentile nations, and to exhibit the goodness and the sovereignty of God. By the vineyard we are to understand the Church of God. By the householder the Head of the Church. By the laborers hired early in the morning, we may understand those brought in in the patriarchal age. By those hired at the third, sixth, and ninth hours, those brought in under the ministry of Moses, Samuel, and John the Baptist; and by those hired at the eleventh hour, the Gentiles are evidently intended, who were brought in at that period of the world commonly denominated the last days. By accommodation, and for important practical purposes, we may take this view of the subject. By the vineyard we may understand, as before, the Church of God; by the householder, the Head of the Church; whilst by the day we may understand the season of grace allotted to us in this world; and by the different hours in which the laborers were hired, we may

understand the different periods in which sinners are converted and brought into the bosom of the Church. Taking this view of the parable, we wish

I. To point out those who are spiritually idle, and

II. Mention those who have probably reached the eleventh hour.

I. Point out those who are spiritually idle. To determine this matter, we need only inquire, What is that great business which we have to attend to in this world? and then it will, of course, follow as a necessary consequence, that those who are neglecting this grand concern, are, and ought to be, numbered with those who are spiritually idle. And now, my brethren, what is this great concern? Rest assured, God Almighty never sent us into this world merely that we might plant, and build, and buy and sell, and get gain, and then go and sleep an everlasting sleep in the grave. How much less did he send us into this world that we might run the round of worldly pleasure, and fashion, and sin, and folly, and then drop into the pit which has no bottom! O no! Man has an immortal soul, and a higher destiny awaits him. He is to prepare for another and a better world. According to the Scriptures there is a heaven. O heaven, sweet heaven! The purchase of a Saviour's blood, the Christian's rest, the pilgrim's home, the dwelling-place of love, of glory, and of God! The patriarchs are there, the prophets are there, the martyrs are there, our blessed Saviour is there, aye, and all who have fallen asleep in Jesus are there! O heaven, sweet heaven! the loveliest and most desirable place in all the empire of the great God? This being the



case, our great business on earth is to live and act in such a manner that, having glorified God in our day and generation, we may, when death comes, have nothing to do but to die, to fall asleep in Jesus, and wake up in that holy and happy world, and there be with God and his angels forever and ever! Yes, my brethren, this is our great business on earth, and, in comparison with it, everything else dwindles into perfect insignificance; for "what is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" And now, let it be remarked, there are two things which constitute essential parts of this business of preparation for heaven, viz., repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

I. We must repent of our sins.—This was the burden of John the Baptist; with this doctrine our Saviour commenced his ministry, and you recollect the language of Paul upon Mars Hill. "The times of this ignorance," says he, "God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." And for this he assigns a substantial reason; "for," continues he, "God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness." And you recollect that when some told our Saviour of certain Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, he replied, "Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." How sweeping is this language! "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He comes, as it were, to the rich man rolling in affluence, and says: Thinkest thou, O rich man, that thy wealth on

earth will plead for thee in the day of judgment? I tell thee nay, "but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He comes to the poor man, struggling with adversity, and says: Thinkest thou, O poor man, that thy trials on earth will exempt thee in the day of reckoning? I tell thee nay, "but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." He comes also to the man of silvery locks, and says: Thinkest thou, aged man, that thy silvery locks will stand thee instead at the bar of thy Maker? I tell thee nay, "but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Aye, and he comes to the young man and the young maiden, who have the freshness of youth upon them, and says: Thinkest thou, O vain youth, that the dew of thy youth will plead for thee in the day of final accounts? I tell thee nay, "but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." I repeat it, the language is sweeping—all have sinned, says the apostle, and therefore all must repent, or there is no such thing as entering the heavenly world. The Bible settles the matter, and we see that it must be so in the very nature of the case; for, suppose the sinner to enter heaven in an impenitent state, what would he do there? Certainly he would justify himself, and condemn his Maker. He would plant the standard of revolt "hard by the throne of God," and teach lessons of rebellion to the loyal and happy ones in glory. The thought is horrible. The case then is doubly clear, that where God is, the impenitent sinner cannot come; where heaven is, the impenitent sinner can have no place. These things being so, repentance forming an essential part of the business of preparation for heaven, it is im-

portant that we know what true repentance is. It implies a conviction of sin. Serious thought is not enough; we must feel that we are sinners, and great sinners, in the sight of God, and that it is of his mercies that we have not been consumed. Moreover, true repentance implies sorrow of heart that we have sinned against a Being so good and great; and especially that we have so long slighted and rejected a dying Saviour. Besides, in true repentance, there is always a settled purpose to forsake our sins and turn from all our evil ways. Believe me, brethren, this work of repentance is a deep work. It takes hold upon the heart, and revolutionizes all the feelings of the soul. We must repent, not like the hypocritical Ephraimites, who howled indeed upon their beds, but cried not unto God in their hearts; nor like the king of Egypt, who repented whilst the mighty thunderings were sounding in his ears, but who, so soon as they were hushed, sinned on as before; nor like the unhappy Judas, who legally repented, and then went and hanged himself. No! but we must repent like a David, who offered to God the sacrifice of a broken heart and a contrite spirit. We must repent like the prodigal, who said, "I will arise and go to my Father, and say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as one of thy hired servants;" and who arose and did accordingly. In short, we must repent like the publican, who, "standing afar off, would not so much as lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." And now permit me

to ask each one in this assembly, respectfully, have you repented? You have shed many tears, it may be, but not one for your sins. You have heaved many sighs, but perhaps not one for your sins. And you have felt many a pang, but not one for your sins. Is this so? Alas! you have neglected one of the essential parts of the business of preparation for heaven; you are numbered with those who are spiritually idle; and what if the angel of death touch you, in your present state? Alas! you are undone, gone forever! But

2. We must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.—This is another essential part of the business of preparation for heaven. You recollect that when certain ones asked our Saviour what they should do to work the work of God, he replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent." And so important and so essential is this, that the Saviour himself says, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." And now, what is it to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? There need be no difficulty. Understanding the way of salvation, through a crucified Saviour, and approving of that way, we are cordially to accept of it, thanking God for his unspeakable gift. But as so much has been said about historical faith, temporary faith, saving faith, and the like, it may be proper for us to examine the matter a little further. Faith, I would define to be the belief of the testimony of God in general, having special reference to Christ as the sinner's only hope, or in other language, it is simply to take God at his word. In the eleventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews we find numerous exemplifications of the nature of faith.



For example: "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house." God had said unto Noah, "The end of all flesh is come before me, for the earth is filled with violence through them, and behold, I will destroy them with the earth; make thee an ark; and behold I, even I do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh wherein is the breath of life from under heaven, but with thee will I establish my covenant, and thou shalt come into the ark, thou and thy sons, thy wife, and thy son's wives with thee." Now Noah believed, in his heart, that it really would be just as God had said, and he acted accordingly. This was faith, in relation to this matter. Let a similiar faith be exercised in relation to Christ, and the soul is saved. For example it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation, and he that believeth in him shall not be ashamed.\* Now, let the sinner venture his soul on this naked promise of a God that cannot lie. Let him take God at his word, and put him upon his honor, and he exercises that faith which will assuredly land the soul in glory. The illustration of Cecil is in point; it is substantially this: Coming into his house one day, he saw his little girl amusing herself with some beautiful beads: wishing to teach her the nature of faith, he said, "My daughter, throw those beads into the fire." O! how could the little girl throw her pretty beads into the fire? And as she was hesitating, her father added, "My daughter, throw those beads

\* Compare Isaiah xxviii. 16, with Romans ix. 33.

into the fire, and you shall not lose by it." The little girl looked in her father's face, to see if he was in good earnest: convinced of this, she made a desperate effort, and threw her beads into the fire. The next day he went out and bought a number of beautiful articles, likely to please a girl of her age, and coming in, with a pleasant countenance, said, "My daughter, your father makes you a present this morning of this box and all it contains." "What," said she, "all these beautiful things mine, papa?" "Yes, my dear, this is your father's present this morning." "What, all these beautiful things mine?"—Almost too good to be true! And now, whilst her eyes were sparkling with delight, and her little heart was dancing for joy, her father said, "My daughter, do not you recollect yesterday I said, Throw those beads into the fire, and you shall not lose by it?" "Yes, papa." "Well, have you lost anything by it now?" "O! no, papa," said she, "no indeed!" "Now," replied he, "I have done this to show you what faith is. The Bible says, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall not lose by it. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

How perfectly simple faith is! I repeat it, it is just to take God at his word, and put him upon his honor. A man dreamed once, (I care nothing about dreams, but I like illustrations,)—a man dreamed once that he was going along in the broad road, and Satan was dragging him down to hell: alarmed, he cried for help, and suddenly one appeared in a lovely form, and said, "Follow me!" Immediately Satan vanished; and in his dream the man thought he followed the heavenly one in a straight and

narrow way, until he came to a river, where he saw no bridge. Pointing in a certain direction, the angel said, "Pass over that bridge." "I see no bridge," said the man. "Yes, there is a bridge, and you must pass over it, for there is no other, and heaven is beyond." Looking more narrowly, the dreamer saw what appeared to be a hair, extending from one bank of the river to the other bank. "Pass over on that," said the angel. "O, how can I?" said the man, "it is too slender, and cannot sustain me." "It will sustain you. I am from above; I lie not, and I give you my word it will sustain you." And now, whilst the man was trembling and afraid to venture, he thought that Satan again seized upon him to drag him down to hell. Urged by necessity, he put his foot upon the bridge, slender as it appeared, and found it solid plank, a substantial bridge, and he went over safely, and entered shouting into the heavenly world. Now the awakened sinner, under divine influences, is brought, so to speak, to the bank of the river. Heaven is beyond. He asks how he can reach that happy world. He is told he must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved; but this promise is not enough; it appears only as the hair extended from one bank of the river to the other bank. The sinner wants something more substantial; but this is the bridge which must take him over, and there is no other. And slender as the bridge of divine promise may appear in his eyes, only let him venture upon it, and he shall know that it is strong enough to sustain millions. Some persons stumble at the simplicity of the way of salvation. There is no occasion, for

everything that God does is marked with simplicity. What man does is apt to be complicated ; but in union with wisdom and grandeur, a beautiful simplicity reigns throughout all the works of God. Suppose, my friends, you and I had the lighting up of the world, what a complicated machinery we would have ! How many ten thousand lamps would we make use of ! and the world by these would not be well lighted up after all. But God proposes to light up the world, and, only see ! one brilliant sun, like an urn of overflowing light, pours day upon the world ; better, infinitely better, than all our lamps. Even so, if all the ministers on earth, aye, and if all the angels in heaven, should unite their efforts to save one sinner from the damnation of hell, it would be all in vain. But thank God, one loving, dear, dying Christ can save millions, can save all who will come unto God through him. Hence this language of the Saviour himself : " As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And as many are apt to stumble at the simplicity of this way of salvation, the Saviour comes over the same ground again, substantially, in the very next verse : " For," continues he, " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In the next verse the same idea is, with some change of phraseology, presented a third time, and in the following verse even a fourth time. This is remarkable, and it seems to speak this language :—Ye sons of men, marvel not at the simplicity of



the way of salvation. This is the way—this is the way! Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. And, to crown the matter, how clear and easily understood is the Saviour's illustration in reference to the brazen serpent. The children of Israel were bitten by fiery serpents. The venom was deadly. Moses could not heal them; the elders of Israel could not heal them; nor could they heal themselves. God alone could meet the case. In the plenitude of his mercy he directs Moses to prepare a brazen serpent, and place it upon a pole in the midst of the camp; and was pleased to pledge his veracity that those who, when bitten, would look, should live. Here is an Israelite bitten. He is in the most remote part of the camp, writhing in agony upon the ground. "O send for Moses," says he, "send for the elders." They come, and ask what is the matter? "O Moses," replies he, "a serpent has bitten me, I am in agony, I am dying! O help me!" "I cannot help you," says Moses. "Elders of Israel, for pity's sake help a dying man!" "We cannot help you," say they. "Well, what is to be done; must I die?" "Certainly not. There is no necessity," says Moses. "Yonder is the brazen serpent, placed upon the pole for this very purpose, that those who are bitten, on looking, should live." Now the man, seeing that Moses cannot cure him, nor the elders, nor can he cure himself—convinced that this is the last resort, the only remedy, turns his dying eyes upon the brazen serpent, and springing up, exclaims, "Glory be to God, I am cured! I am a sound man! Now, says the Saviour, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so

must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." And this falls in with another passage of Scripture: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else." Yes, my brethren, a crucified Saviour is the sinner's only hope. One look of faith at this bleeding victim, and you are converted! One look of faith, and your sins are all forgiven! Aye, one look of faith at this great atoning sacrifice, and the universe is changed in relation to you, and over you there are shoutings in the heavenly world—"The dead is alive again, and the lost is found." But you say, perhaps, that you do not understand what is meant by this look; I will give an illustration. Here is a stripling; a strong man has seized upon him, and threatens to take his life. The stripling cannot cope with this strong man; he wants his father, who is a stronger man, to come to his relief. He looks, and sees his father in the distance. You can understand that look. Only cast such a look toward the blessed Saviour, and so sure as the Bible is true, you will reach at last the heavenly world, and there a crown of glory shall rest upon your head. And now remember, this exercise of faith in Christ is indispensably necessary. It forms an essential part of the business of preparation for heaven, for the sum and substance of all that the Bible says upon this subject is this: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." And here I would remark, if you wish to know whether your faith is of the right kind, you must try it by the Bible test. To you that believe, says Peter,

He, that is, Christ, is precious. Yes, the genuine believer has new views of Christ as a suitable and most precious Saviour. And whereas the blessed Saviour was to him before as a root out of a dry ground, without form or comeliness, he is now the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley; yea, the chiefest among ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely; and he can enter into the feelings of the poet, who says:

“O, could I speak the matchless worth;  
O, could I sound the glories forth  
Which in my Saviour shine!  
I’d soar and touch the heavenly strings,  
And vie with Gabriel, while he sings,  
In notes almost divine.”

These things being so, if there be any who love not the Lord Jesus, who have never felt their need of him—in other words, who have never received him in the arms of a confiding and appropriating faith, let all such know that they have neglected an essential part of the great business which they must attend to in this world, or never enter heaven. However active and industrious they may be in relation to the things of this world, they have neglected the great concern, and must be enrolled amongst the spiritually idle, and to them I would say, “Why stand ye here all the day idle?” But this leads me

II. To point out those who have probably reached the eleventh hour. It is well known that the Jews, in ancient times, divided their day into twelve hours. The third hour being about nine o’clock; the sixth, noon; the ninth, about three o’clock, P. M.; and of course the eleventh hour

was near the closing of the day. If we may be permitted to make a corresponding division of the day of grace, doubtless there are some present who have reached the third hour, some the sixth, some the ninth, and some the eleventh hour. We cannot say who have positively reached either of these periods, but we wish to point out those who have probably reached the last, the eleventh hour.

1. Those advanced in age. This is a clear case, for their hoary locks, their increasing infirmities, and the dimness passing over their eyes plainly show that with them the third hour is gone, the sixth hour is passed, even the ninth hour is rolled away, and the eleventh hour is come. Aged sinner, your sun is near its setting, the shadows of evening are lengthening around you, your eleventh hour is come! Have you never yet entered the vineyard? O how much precious time have you wasted! How very long you have been perilling the salvation of your soul! And are you still neglecting the great business, the grand concern? O how criminal and dangerous is this neglect! "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" But—

2. Those whose health is failing have also probably reached the eleventh hour. I know very well, that diseases are not always the immediate harbingers of death, but frequently they are. Our Saviour, it is true, said of a Lazarus, when he was sick, This sickness is not unto death; but who can approach any one on earth, whose health is now impaired, and use that language? Ah! could we look into the rolls of heaven, and know the



number of months appointed unto them, we would perhaps have to say, at least of some of them, as the prophet said of Benhadad when he was sick, "The Lord hath showed me that thou shalt surely die!" There may be a fever just beginning to revel in the veins, that is to land this one in the house appointed for all living! And there may be a slight cold now falling upon the lungs which is to wrap that one in the winding-sheet before many more months shall have rolled away! The healthful may die, and suddenly too, but those whose health is impaired seem to be already summoned! "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

In casting my eye over this large congregation, I see many who are in the morning of life, and many too, who, although not young, are nevertheless in strong and vigorous health, and they may be flattering themselves with the idea that it is quite early in the day with them yet. If the third hour is gone, surely it is not beyond the sixth, or at the utmost the ninth hour! My dear brethren, be not too confident in this matter. Where is your graveyard! Let us pay it a brief visit. Ah! what do we there see? Long graves and short graves, and graves of every kind! Yes, there hoary age and beardless youth sleep side by side! Suppose all in this sanctuary should now withdraw, and all the dead in the neighboring graveyards should rise up out of their graves, and, wrapped in their winding-sheets, should fill this house, what kind of a congregation, in relation to age, would it be? Very much, I suspect, like the present assembly. Here we might see some patriarchal man, with his locks silvery

with age ; there a venerable matron, far advanced in the vale of life ; here we might see a youthful husband, and there the wife of his youth. In another part of the church we might see a promising son, just ripening into manhood ; and there a daughter, and a lovely one, just turned of sixteen ; whilst in that pew we might see a child, the pride of doating parents ; and there a sweet little babe, whom angels sung to rest ! And here, too, where I stand, we might see a Rodgers or a Wesley, bending under the load of age—or a Spencer or a Larned, vigorous in youthful days.

Ah ! my brethren, the congregation of the dead is very much like the congregation of the living. It embraces persons of every age and every sex. Young men and maidens, old men and children, they all do lie down together in the dust, and the worms do cover them. Suppose, then, you are in good health, and even young ; you are not sure, you cannot be, that your eleventh hour has not yet come. Whilst with some the period of life on earth is long and extended as a summer's day, with others it is short and contracted as a day in mid-winter. Sometimes the sun of life goes down at noon, and sometimes even whilst the dew is yet upon the ground. And whilst in some cases life gradually fades away, as the fleecy cloud which imperceptibly melts away on the azure sky, sometimes it vanishes like the meteor, which for a few moments plays along the edge of a tempest, and then is gone. O how uncertain is life ! We may compute the length of any natural day, but we cannot tell the length of any day of life. We can tell the very minute when

yonder sun will set, but we cannot tell the hour, nor the month, nor the year, when the sun of life will go down; hence the language of the Saviour, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Then be not too sure that your eleventh hour has not arrived. But suppose you knew precisely when your life on earth would terminate. Suppose it were reduced to a certainty that you should attain three-score years and ten; even in that case you could not say that your eleventh hour has not arrived. And here I now bring forward one of the most awful doctrines found in all the sacred volume. It is this—that the day of grace is not always as long as the day of life. "My Spirit," says God, "shall not always strive with man." "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." Paul speaks of some who were given over to a hard heart and a reprobate mind; and with regard to others he says, "God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. ii. 11, 12. The idea is this: that some, on account of their sins, are judicially hardened. Having grieved the Spirit, he takes his departure; and left to themselves, they become incorrigible, past feeling, and past hope. But how shall we find out when their day of grace is drawing to a close? As there are certain symptoms which indicate the closing of the natural day, even so there are certain symptoms which, to say the least, seem to give awful indications that the day of grace is drawing to a close. We do not pretend to decide

upon any individual case. We make general remarks, and we do it to sound a seasonable alarm in the ears of those who are still idle, although they have too much reason to fear that their day of grace is winding up.

(1.) When the natural day is drawing to a close, the heat abates, and the chilling influence of approaching night is felt. Even so, when the day of grace is drawing to a close, the warmth of religious feeling subsides, and the chilling, freezing, deadening influence of sin comes over the soul. O, if there are any present who were once excited on the subject of religion; who, at some past period, when they mused upon their lost condition had the fire to burn within, but have now a cold heart, and have lost all concern about their future salvation, they have awful reason to fear that they have grieved the Spirit, and that he is now leaving them, it may be forever! Yes, if after having been blessed with awakening influences, their hearts have become cold and worldly minded, they have now but too much reason to fear that with them the third hour is gone—the sixth hour is gone—the ninth hour rolled away—and that the eleventh hour is come! “Why stand ye here all the day idle?”

(2.) When the natural day is drawing to a close, light diminishes and darkness begins to steal over the face of creation. Thus, about the eleventh hour of the day of grace, spiritual light grows dim, and judicial darkness thickens upon the soul. The illuminations of the Divine Spirit frequently issue in the sound conversion of the soul unto God; sometimes, however, they do not. They make visible the straight gate and narrow way, but being



resisted, the sinner, after all, is left to perish in his sin. This is truly an awful case, for, according to the apostle Peter, it were better not to have known the way of life, than, after we have known it, to turn from the holy commandment. Yes, it were better never to have had the illuminations of the Spirit, than after we have had them, to have the shades of spiritual death to fall upon the soul; for, in addition to other sins laid to the charge of such persons, they will have to answer for quenching the Spirit. Are there not some present who can recollect the time when they had comparatively clear views of the value of the soul, the importance of religion, and the necessity of the Saviour? How is it now? Have these things faded upon the view? Are they in a great measure hidden from their eyes? Alas! their case is an alarming one. They have reason to fear that their day of grace is drawing to a close!—that the third hour is gone—and the sixth hour gone—and the ninth hour is also rolled away—and that the eleventh hour is come! O, ye loiterers! ye who are procrastinating and putting off to some future period the claims of God and eternity, you have much reason to wake up and bestir yourselves, for your sun seems indeed to be going down, and the shadows of evening lengthening around you. “Why stand ye here all the day idle?”

(3.) Once more.—When the natural day is drawing to a close, laborers are becoming weary of labor, and are more disposed to sit down, lie down, and slumber and sleep, than to toil and labor any more. Just so it is with the spiritual idler about the close of the day of

grace. Sometimes persons, during revivals, and at other times too, when under awakening influences, are greatly roused; take a lively interest in religious matters; set a great value upon all the means of grace; are willing, if necessary, to walk many miles to church, and that through rain, through mud and mire; and are willing, moreover, to be personally conversed with on the subject of religion. After awhile, however, these persons begin to lose their interest in all such matters; begin to absent themselves from the house of God; complain that the sermon is too long, and the preacher too plain; and, like certain ones in the times of Amos the prophet, are ready to say of the Sabbath, O what a weariness it is! When will the Sabbath be gone, that we may sell corn and set forth wheat? Amos viii. 5. Moreover, if a pious friend speaks to them on the subject of religion, they have no relish for such conversation, and are ready to say, "Let me alone!" Alas! the case is clear! such have grieved the Spirit of God; he is withdrawing his quickening influences, and the consequence is, religion is becoming irksome, and all its duties tiresome; and having lost the interest which they once felt in religious matters, they would now much rather lie down in spiritual sloth, and slumber and sleep in carnal security, than labor to enter into the promised land. Are there any in this house whom this picture suits? I solemnly declare I would not be in their case for a thousand worlds, for they have awful reason to fear that the shades of night are gathering around them, even the shades of that "long, dark, dark night, which has no morn beyond it, and no star." O, it

is a dreadful thing to be abandoned of the Spirit, and to be given over to a hard heart and a reprobate mind! And yet there is such a thing as the day of grace closing before death comes. How awful the thought! Whilst the sinner is in the midst of his sins, and in the midst of health, too, the sentence may go forth against him—"Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone;" and then, although yet on earth, he is sealed over to wrath. Passing along the road, you look over the fence and see an old field; the trees, cut down, are lying upon the ground, and rotting there. This may represent the sinner, cut down by the hand of death, his body laid in the grave, and his soul sunk deeper than the grave. Passing along, you see another old field. The trees are not cut down, it is true, but none are alive: although standing, they are all dead. Their branches are dry, and there is no foliage there. How is this? The axeman has girdled them; the showers descend and the winds of heaven pass over them; their branches rattle in the breeze, but there is no verdure, no foliage any more. O, procrastinating sinner! remember, God may girdle you this day; and should he do it, I tell you the truth, it will be all over with you forever. Hence this language of Scripture, "Woe also to them when I depart from them," saith the Lord. Hosea ix. 12. In such a case, all the moral and religious sensibilities of the soul are deadened. The heart becomes like rock, like adamant. As the dead man feels not the burning of the coal lodged in his bosom, and as the flinty rock feels not the softening influences of the showers of heaven, so it is with the sinner

when his day of grace is brought to a close. He is past feeling and past hope. Have any persons present, then, any reason whatever to believe that the eleventh hour is come with them? Surely it is high time for them to wake up; to enter the vineyard, and diligently to prepare for a better world. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

Having pointed out those who are spiritually idle, and those who have probably reached the eleventh hour, suffer me now to expostulate and conclude. O, ye who have neglected the great concern, and have suffered so much of your day of grace to pass away unimproved, "why stand ye here all the day idle?" What reason can you give? Have you no souls? Or is it a matter of no consequence to you whether they be happy or miserable, saved or damned, in the world to come? Have you spent the third, sixth, and ninth hour in idleness, and will you spend in the same way the eleventh also? What! this little remnant of the day of grace, which, through mercy, yet remains to you, will you spend that in idleness also? Will you approve of this upon a dying bed? Will you justify it amid the thunders of the last great day? O, tell me, then, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

• Do you say that no one has invited you? What! no pious friend, no mother, no sister, no companion, no minister, no man of God? Can you say this? My brother, beloved pastor of this church, have you never invited them? O yes, I am sure you have, most affectionately and most earnestly, and may I not almost add, times and



ways without number! Can you not recollect, my friends, how on such an occasion this man of God entered the sacred desk, having unusual solemnity depicted in his countenance. You recollect he took his text, and reasoned concerning righteousness, temperance, and a judgment to come. As he proceeded he waxed warm; he filled his mouth with arguments; he brought the high claims of God and eternity to bear powerfully upon the understanding, the conscience, and the heart. And what was this? It was my brother's plan of inviting you to enter into the vineyard; and when he saw that you were unaffected, the man of God wept! O how sacred are the tears of the faithful and affectionate pastor, weeping over those of his charge who refuse to attend to the great concern! It is the spirit of the prophet, who said, If ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride. Yea, it is the Spirit of the blessed Jesus himself, who beheld the city and wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which make for thy peace, but now they are hidden from thine eyes." But to proceed: When my brother saw that his reasonings were not regarded, and that his arguments produced no impression, you recollect he changed his voice, and, so to speak, taking you by the hand, he led you to the gate of the celestial city, and pointing out the glories and the joys of that happy world, and that you might finally have a happy entrance there, he urged you to attend to the great concern. And when he saw you still careless, again the man of God wept! What a loud call was this from your beloved pastor, to

enter into the vineyard? But this was not all: when he saw you careless still, he was ready to give up and retire in despondency: but the thought of the value of your precious souls, and his own responsibility, roused him to make yet another effort. In his description, he led you to the borders of the pit; he drew aside the curtain; he pointed out to you the world of wo, and caused you to hear, as it were, the wailings of those who had lost their day, and were now crying out in anguish, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." And what was this, but another effort of my brother to arouse you, and to press you to enter into the vineyard? What! no one invited you? Yes, methinks your pious father did; and it was in a solemn hour! It was on a dying bed! Some one told you that your father was very ill, and wished to see you. You trembled, and hastened to obey the summons; with solemn feelings you entered the door of his chamber. The curtains were down, the room was darkened! Silence and grief reigned there! Silence, still as the grave, except broken by the light footsteps of those who passed gently over the carpeted floor; or the low whisperings of those who marked the sad symptoms of approaching death; or, perchance, broken by the hard breathing of the one who was now drawing near his end! With a trembling heart, you approached the bedside of your dying parent. He saw you, and took you by the hand. His hand was cold as clay, and the sweat of death was upon his pale brow. He pressed your hand, and looked you in the face. Can you ever forget that look? It spoke volumes!

He wished to speak, but he was very feeble—again he pressed your hand, and said, “God bless you, my child! Meet me in heaven!” Then, looking up, he said, “Precious Saviour, I am ready now! Come, Lord Jesus! come quickly!” And while you were looking on, he ceased to breathe, and was with his God! And was this no call? O yes, you have received a call from the very threshold of heaven—aye, and from one who loved you, and longed to meet you in that happy world. How can you, then, say that no one has invited you? “Why stand ye here all the day idle?”

Do you say that the work is too great? I know it is too great for your unaided strength, but you may obtain strength from on high. Yes, there is a power divine, which stands ready to afford all needful aid. This power has sufficed for many. It may suffice for you. There is not a want in the sinner, but there is a corresponding fulness in the blessed Saviour. Fear not, says this heavenly Friend to the trembling soul—fear not, I will help thee, I will strengthen thee, yea, I will uphold thee by the right hand of my righteousness.

Perhaps you think the work is so easy it may be accomplished at any time, even in your last moments. To be sure it might, if God should then give you grace. But are you sure that he will? Is it likely? When you have given the best of your days to the service of the devil, is it reasonable to suppose that God will accept of the dregs? O, how many a poor sinner is snatched away without warning. How many go delirious to their graves; and how many, if not delirious, are racked with pain.

How many are stupid; how many are too feeble to bear any excitement; and how many are purely under the influence of fear. O how unwise, and O how perilous it is to put off to the last moment that which should engage our first and most serious concern! I could tell you of some death-bed scenes, but I spare you. "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

Do you say that the householder is not willing to receive you? "Say unto them, as I live, said the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn and live. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Say not then that the householder is not willing to receive you; at least say it not until with all your heart you have entreated his favor and he has frowned you away.

Do you say that the reward is not enough? What! to have our sins forgiven, is this nothing? to have our peace made with heaven, is this nothing? and to be adopted into the family of the Great God, is this nothing? the reward not enough! What! when we are about to die, to find ourselves under the shadow of the Almighty—is this nothing? To find ourselves encircled in the arms of everlasting love—is this nothing? To find ourselves encompassed by angels, and just on the wing for glory—is this nothing? And when the soul is dislodged from its earthly tenement, to be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, to hear the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord;" to see the King in his beauty; to be robed and crowned, and emparadised in heaven; and to be associated with the



spirits of the just made perfect, and to live and reign with Christ in glory everlasting—is all this nothing? O, my brethren, the rewards are the rewards of grace, they are the purchase of a Saviour's blood, and therefore will be rich and great beyond all the power of language to express, or the heart of man to conceive. Immortal man! lose not the prize held up before you! Be up and a-doing! "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" O think how much is at stake—even your own soul—your own precious soul! O who can tell its value! Suppose this world were a globe of gold, and each star in yonder firmament a jewel of the first order, and the moon a diamond, and the sun literally a crown of all created glory—one soul, in value, would outweigh them all. Here is a man standing on board of a vessel at sea, holding his hands over the sides of the vessel; he is sporting with a jewel worth a hundred thousand dollars, and which, too, is all his fortune. Playing with his jewel, he throws it up, and catches it—throws it up and catches it! A friend, noticing the brilliancy of the jewel, warns him of the danger of losing it, and tells him that if it slip through his fingers it goes down to the bottom of the deep, and can be recovered no more. "O, there is no danger," says he, "I have been doing this a long time, and you see I have not lost it yet." Again he throws it up, and—it is gone! past recovery—gone! O, when the man finds that his jewel is indeed lost, and by his own folly lost, who can describe his agony, as he exclaims, "I have lost my jewel, my fortune, my all!" O sinner, hear me; casketed in your bosom, you have a jewel of infinitely greater

value; in idling away your precious time, you are in danger of losing that pearl of price unknown. In other words, neglecting the interests of your precious soul, you are in danger of being lost forever. O, why neglect any longer the great concern? Many of your dearest friends are in the vineyard, why linger you without? "Why stand ye here all the day idle?"

Well, the evening will come when the Lord of the vineyard will say to his steward—"Call the laborers and give them their hire." O glorious hour! O, sweet coronation day? How will the laborers come! From the east and from the west, from the north and from the south. Millions crowding upon millions! Christians of every communion, and the pious from out of every nation under heaven. With what joy will they come around the heavenly Householder, and at his hand receive the high rewards of grace. Methinks with a smile he will reach out to them the crown—the glittering crown; and they will take the crown—the glittering crown, and sing and shout, "O to grace how great a debtor!" And he will give the robe—the spotless robe; and they will take the robe—the spotless robe, and sing and shout, "O to grace how great a debtor!" And now all heaven rings jubilee, as the ransomed of the Lord return and come to this heavenly Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. But the idlers!—those who all their lives long neglected the great concern, who died without repentance and without faith—where are they? Alas! they are far away! There is no robe for them, no crown for them, no heaven for them! They have lost

their day, and they have lost their souls ; and now nothing remains for them but thrilling remorse and black despair ! O, my procrastinating friends, you have one call more ; it may be the call of the eleventh hour, and your last ! Surely it is high time to think about eternity ; it is high time to enter into the vineyard ; then “ Why stand ye here all the day idle ? ”

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## SERMON XIII.

### THE NECESSITY OF PREPARATION FOR DEATH.

The night cometh, when no man can work.—JOHN ix. 4.

THESE solemn words were uttered by our blessed Saviour, who spake as never man spake. The whole verse reads thus : “ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day ; the night cometh, when no man can work.” Our Saviour speaks here in his mediatorial character, and has reference to his mediatorial work. When this blessed legate from the skies came into our world, it was upon a specific errand ; it was to accomplish a great work, a blessed work, a work of love and reconciliation. It was to accomplish the mighty work of man’s redemption. And upon this his heart was ever set. See him in Jerusalem, when only twelve years of age, sitting with the doctors in the temple, both hearing them and asking them questions. His mother, who had been seeking him with anxiety for three days, said unto

him, "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." And what was his reply? "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" See him at the well of Sychar, whilst instructing the woman of Samaria. "His disciples prayed him, saying, Master, eat. And he said unto them, I have meat to eat, that ye know not of." And when they asked, "Hath any man brought him ought to eat? he answered and said unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." And here, in the case before us, notice his language, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh, when no man can work."

When the time of his departure was arrived, he could say, and did say, "Father, I have glorified thy name on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." In making an application to ourselves of the passage before us, I would call your attention to the following propositions:

I. We, also, have on earth a work to perform.

II. There is a day or season given us, in which to perform this work; and

III. When that day or season is ended, then the night cometh, in which no man can work.

I. We, also, have on earth a work to perform. This we would state in the language of the prophet, "Prepare to meet thy God." That there is a God, all nature cries aloud. Now, this God, as revealed to us in the Scriptures, is a *great* God. Heaven is his throne, and the



earth is his footstool. He fills immensity with his presence. With him all space is as a point, all duration as a moment. Clothed with omnipotent power, he can do all his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth. "He can create, and he destroy;" yea, "can dash whole worlds to death, and make them when he please." Moreover, he is a *holy* God. The very seraphims veil their faces in his presence, and cry, in notes responsive to each other, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts." This is the Being whom Isaiah saw, in the year that king Uzziah died, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and it was in the view of his immaculate purity that the astounded prophet cried out, "Wo is me, for I am undone; for I am a man of unclean lips; and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!" Now, this God, so great and so holy, we must meet. We must meet him in the hour of death, for we are expressly told that then the dust shall return to the earth, as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it. And this great and holy God we must meet also in the resurrection, in the last day. "And I saw," says John, "a great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the heavens and the earth fled away, and there was no place for them; and I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books." And this may remind us of the language of Paul, "We must all appear before the

judgment-seat of Christ, that we may receive according to the deeds done in the body, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil."

My next remark is this: By nature, or in an unregenerate state, we are not prepared to meet God, for he is holy and just; he cannot look upon sin with allowance; and alas! the best of us are sinners, great sinners in his sight, altogether unclean, and utterly unfit to appear before him in judgment. And most terrible will be our doom, if in the great day of judgment we should be weighed and found wanting? Hence our duty, as presented in the words of the prophet: "Prepare to meet thy God." And here permit me to say, two things are essentially requisite—first, justifying righteousness; and secondly, sanctifying grace.

With regard to the first, the state of the case is this: God has given man a law, armed with penal sanctions. This law man has broken. Of course, he has incurred the penalty; this penalty is death. Satisfaction must be made, or the sinner must perish: for the law thunders out "indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that sinneth." The sinner himself can make no satisfaction, for his sins are many, and his best works have, in the sight of God, no merit. Hence it is written, "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight." But now comes in Heaven's plan of justification by the righteousness of another, even of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has made the great atonement; having borne our sins in his own body upon the tree, and having thus, according to the Scriptures, made an end of

transgression, and brought in everlasting righteousness. The Bible is full of this: "There is now, therefore, no condemnation," says Paul, "to them which are in Christ Jesus," And again, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." And again, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." This righteousness, according to the Scriptures, meets all the demands of the law; and arrayed in this righteousness,

"God will pronounce the sinner just,  
And take the saint to heaven."

Blessed expedient of heavenly wisdom! This is the rainbow upon the body of the dark cloud; here we have the only star of hope rising upon a ruined world. But how are we to lay hold upon this justifying righteousness, how are we to make it ours? By faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." And again, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Yes, it is this faith, this precious faith, which unites us to Christ in our spiritual calling; and it is this which guarantees our acquittal and our acceptance in the great day. Hear the words of the Saviour himself: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have eternal life;" and that the matter may be made, if possible, more sure, the Saviour comes over the same ground in the very next verse; "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but

have everlasting life." If, then, we would prepare to meet God in peace, we must fall in with Heaven's plan; we must accept of the Saviour provided; we must cordially receive him, with all the overflowings of a penitent and believing heart; and thus clothed upon with the robes of his righteousness—or, as it is elsewhere expressed, having our robes washed and made white in his blood, we shall stand justified in the sight of God, and have no reason to fear the thunders of the last great day. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift! O, what would we do without a precious, all-atoning Saviour!

But, although this righteousness of Christ will avail to meet all the demands of the law and justice of God, yet, in order that we may be prepared to enjoy the smiles of God and the bliss of heaven, another thing is requisite—even sanctifying grace. Can a blind man enjoy the beauties of a flower garden? can a deaf man the music of the grove? or a sick man the pleasures of a banquet? No more can the sinner, without sanctifying grace, have any taste or relish for the employments and enjoyments of the heavenly world. There must be a work of the Spirit, renovating and cleansing the heart; in other words, there must be what the Scriptures denominate the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, in order to qualify us for heaven. Everything is holy there! The angels are holy, the redeemed are holy, and He who fills the throne is the thrice holy Lord God Almighty—holiness is the very element in which all who worship God in heaven do live, and move, and have their being; and our souls must be adapted to that element, or we could not



be happy there. I do believe that the sinner unrenewed would be miserable even within the precincts of eternal day; hence the language, the remarkable language of the Saviour, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Observe, he does not say, will not, must not, shall not, but *cannot*. There is an impossibility in the very nature of the case. The blind man must have his eyes opened, or he cannot enjoy the beauties of the flower garden; the deaf man must have his ears unstopped, or he cannot enjoy the music of the grove; the sick man must be restored to health, or he cannot enjoy the pleasures of the banquet. Even so the sinner must have his heart changed, or, I repeat it, he could not be happy even in heaven. He cannot enjoy the beauties of heaven, for he is spiritually blind; he cannot enjoy the music of heaven, for he is spiritually deaf; nor can he enjoy the pleasure of heaven, for he is spiritually sick. The carnal mind is enmity against God, says the apostle; it is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be. How then can he who has his carnal mind (and this is the case of every unregenerate man) be happy in the divine presence? How can he be pleased with the songs of praise which are ever ascending? How can he be pleased in contemplating the perfections of one whom he loves not? How can he be pleased with that society for which he has no taste, or those employments for which he has no relish? The soaring eagle may gaze with delight upon the brilliant sun, but the bird of night chooses not to look, even for a moment, upon that brilliant sun, nor would any man whose eyes are diseased. Alas! the unrenewed

sinner is diseased in every part, and therefore, in his unrenewed state he is not fit for heaven.

“Our nature’s totally depraved,  
The heart a sink of sin ;  
Without a change we can’t be saved,  
‘Ye must be born again.’ ”

And is there no hope for the sinner? Thank God, there is balm in Gilead!—There is a Physician there! He who, by his blood, can wash away the foulest stain of guilt, can, by his Spirit, cleanse the vilest heart; can slay the enmity within, yea, can sanctify us throughout, in soul, body, and spirit, and make us, as the apostle expresses it, “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” How beautiful is this language!—Jesus Christ, made of God unto us, wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:—what a glorious, all-sufficient Saviour! There is not a want in us, but there is a corresponding fulness in him. As it is written, “It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell.” Let those, then, who wish to meet God in peace in the last great day, now come to Christ, who is declared to be the way, the truth and the life—or the true and living way. He is the only Mediator—he is our only hope; and, verily, no man cometh unto the Father but by him. Think of this, and prepare to meet your God!

II. There is a day or season given to us in this world, in which to attend to this matter. We are told that on the shores of the Black Sea, the winds of heaven are held in check some eighteen or twenty days every year, that the little halcyon birds may have an opportunity of mak-

ing their nests and hatching their young, on the smooth surface of the water. Be that as it may, we know that, to answer important purposes, there is seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, and day and night; moreover, Solomon says, To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get and a time to lose; a time to keep and a time to cast away; a time to rend and a time to sew; a time to keep silence and a time to speak; a time to love and a time to hate; a time of war and a time of peace. Now, if time be given to attend to matters which relate to the body, shall not a time also be given to attend to matters which relate to the soul; if to matters of time, why not to matters of eternity? There is such a season. With regard to the antediluvians, the Spirit of God waited with them forty years whilst Noah was building the ark; and you may remember what was said of the Jews in the wilderness: Forty years long was I grieved with that generation, so I swore in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest. And in relation to the case of Jezebel, the faithful and true witness says, "I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not." And now, if time was granted to others, in years gone by, why not to those of the present day?

But here permit me to remark, first, This time is short. In comparison with the ages of eternity, it is short, and even in comparison with the ages beyond the flood. But, viewed in any aspect, it is short; for Job says, "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." And again, it is written, "Thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth, and my age is as nothing before thee." And what says James? "What is your life? Is it not even as a vapor which appeareth for a little, and then vanisheth away?" But the language of Paul is directly to the point: "This I say, brethren, the time is short. It remaineth that they that weep be as they that wept not; and they that rejoice as they that rejoiced not; for the fashion of the world passeth away." Yes, human life is very short. Where are our fathers? And the prophets, do they live forever? How many of the companions of our childhood are now sleeping in the grave? And if we look into our own domestic circle, or at our communion rolls, how many with whom we once associated have already gone the way of all the earth! Ah, my brethren, it is even so:

"Our life is ever on the wing,  
And death is ever nigh;  
The moment when our lives begin,  
We all begin to die."

Yes, we are here to-day, and perhaps gone to-morrow! But this leads me to make a second remark—Our time on earth is not only short, it is uncertain. We know not how we shall die, nor where we shall die, nor when we



shall die. We can tell how long any day in the year will last, but who can tell how long the life of any man will last? We can tell the very moment the natural sun will set, but who can tell the day or the year when his sun of life will go down? Sometimes it is like a midsummer's day, comparatively long; sometimes like a midsummer's night, comparatively short. Sometimes it is like the fleecy cloud, which gradually fades away in the blue sky—sometimes like the meteor playing upon the edge of a dark cloud. One moment it is bright and coruscating—the next moment it is gone! My friends, this is a serious thought. Death frequently comes when least expected. Sometimes no sickness heralds it. Sometimes it calls away the man in the prime of life, when he is in full strength; and sometimes the young maiden in the morning of her days, when her cheeks are fresh and blooming. Sometimes it meets its victim in the sanctuary, and on the highway, as well as in the private dwelling and on the couch of repose. Nay, more, it has been known to visit even the theatre, the race-ground, the ball-room, and the bridal chamber! We cannot think of any place, we cannot think of any set of circumstances, in which some of the human family have not fallen under the withering stroke of death. Hence the timely warning of the Saviour, "Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh." O that all would bear this in mind, and seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Seek it as an object of prime importance; and, in the first place, especially as, according to the Scriptures, there is no work, nor knowledge, nor device, nor

wisdom in the grave, to which we are all going. The pious poet has well said,

"There are no acts of pardon passed,  
In the cold grave to which we haste;  
But darkness, death, and long despair,  
Reign in eternal silence there."

III. But this leads us to a second proposition, which is this:—When this day or season allotted to us on earth is ended, then "the night cometh, when no man can work." What we do, we must do quickly; for upon the proper improvement of our time on earth depends our everlasting weal or wo. Death comes, the state of the soul is fixed, and the curtain is drawn for ever. How solemn and how striking is the language of the Saviour, "The night cometh, when no man can work"—the night of death!

"That long, dark, dark night,  
Which has no morn beyond it, and no star."

My brethren, what is it to die? What are the events of that last awful moment, when the fixed eye, the cold bosom, and the motionless frame, make it known that our friend is gone? What is death? It is the period when the soul leaves the body, breaks away from everything here below, and enters upon the untried scenes of another and eternal world. In other words, it is the ending of time and the beginning of great eternity.

I. When death comes, we cease to be interested in all the exciting scenes of earth. A new star may be discovered, and living astronomers may be all alive on the subject; but a Sir Isaac Newton, or a Kepler, wrapped in

the winding-sheet, and laid in the grave, takes no interest in this newly discovered star. Choice relics of antiquity may be brought to light, and antiquarians throughout the earth may, with great interest, be commenting on the matter; but the antiquarian who is numbered with the pale nations of the dead, takes no interest in these newly discovered relics of antiquity. The affectionate wife, who, when dying, cast her last looks upon the dear man she loved, and said, My husband, come and kiss your dying wife—that wife, now laid in the dust, may have her husband, “the dear man she loved,” brought and laid side by side with her in the grave, and she salutes not her coming husband. Aye, and even the tender mother, who, as she was sinking in the arms of death, said, Bring me my sweet babe, and kissed it; and said, God bless this child; may this child meet its mother in heaven!—that mother buried, may the very next day have her grave opened and that child, wrapped in its little winding-sheet, may be brought and laid upon its mother’s bosom in the grave, and even the tender mother greets not her once darling child. How deep are the slumbers of the dead! How undisturbed by all the passing scenes of human life! Sure, ’tis a serious thing to die. What is death? Ah me! it is the ending of time, and the beginning of great eternity!

2. When death comes, we have done with all the pursuits and callings of life. The dead! alas!

“They have no share in all that’s done  
Beneath the circuit of the sun.”

In death, the monarch lays down his sceptre, and as-

cends his throne no more. In death, the beggar drops his crutch, and pleads for charity no more. In death, the lawyer throws up his briefs, and appears for his client no more. In death, the warrior relinquishes his sword, and braves the fury of battle no more:

“Nor song of peace, nor battle’s roar,  
E’er shall break his slumbers more.”

In death, the merchant retires from his store, the mechanic from his shop, the farmer from his field, the minister from the desk, the judge from the bench, the statesman from the cabinet—to be seen in their places no more. In death, the avaricious cease to accumulate treasure; and in death, even the hard-hearted extortioner at last forgets to grind the faces of the poor. It is all over now. In the city of the dead there are no stirs—the hum of industry is hushed—there is no voice of mirth nor songs of revelry there, nor even the voice of the bridegroom or the bride. Deep solitude is there, and silence, how profound! Nahum, speaking of the utter ruin which should come upon Nineveh, says, “Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust.” And verily this may be said of all whose house is the grave, and whose home is the city of the dead—all even the mightiest, the noblest, and the best. As the prophet says, “Behold, the Lord of hosts doth take away the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, the prudent and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator.” They all do slumber and dwell in the dust. “The night cometh, when no man can work.”



3. When death comes, we have done with all the means of grace. Whilst in health, and in this happy land, we have the means of grace in abundance and rich variety. At the sound of the church-going bell we can enter the sanctuary of our God, and hear the gospel preached, and gather around the sacramental board, and unite in the public prayer and the sweet songs of Zion. We can read our Bibles, and the writings of the pious of every land. We can enter into our closets, and meditate and pray to our Father who seeth in secret. We can attend social prayer meetings, and commune with our Christian friends, as did those who feared God in the days of Malachi. In short, we can now have free access to all the means of grace. But when the night of death cometh, it is all past and gone! Never shall we hear the sound of the church-going bell any more; never again enter the sanctuary, nor hear the gospel preached, nor take our seats at the table of the Lord, nor join the public prayer, nor sing the songs of Zion, nor visit our closets, nor enjoy the means of grace any more. The time for such things with us will be past and gone forever. Alas! the limbs are palsied, they cannot move; the eyes are closed, they cannot see; the ears are heavy, they cannot hear; the tongue is dumb, it cannot speak; the heart is cold, it cannot feel!

Ah, my friends, this is a very serious thought, many, very many in our land set no value upon the means of grace. They rarely ever read the Scriptures; they rarely ever are found in the house of God, perhaps never pray;

they make no use of any of the means of grace—esteem them of no value. But, as one has well said,

“How blessings brighten as they take their flight!  
Like birds, whose beauties languish, half concealed,  
Till mounted on the wing, their glossy plumes  
Expanded, shine with azure, green, and gold.”

Yes, when the shades of evening are lengthening, and the night seems to be near at hand when no man can work, how do many wake up as from a troubled dream, and bitterly regret that they had not more highly prized the means of grace, which are now about to be taken from them forever. “O, if I could but live my life over again, how differently would I act from what I have done!” It was in this spirit that one exclaimed in the near view of death—“I have lost a world of time, and if I could live my life over, I would spend it all in reading David’s Psalms and Paul’s Epistles.” “O, for one Sabbath more—one sermon more!” This has, in substance, been the exclamation of more than one, upon whom the night of death has come, as a night of gloom and black despair. Remember, sinner, you may set little value upon the means of grace now, but believe me that the period will arrive when you would give worlds, if you had them, for another day of gospel privileges to seek salvation in. O that you were wise, that you understood this, that you would consider your latter end! O, be prevailed upon to work while the day lasts, for of a truth, “The night cometh, when no man can work.”

4. When death comes, our probation closes, and our character, good or bad, is stamped for all eternity. Few

thoughts can be more solemn, more awakening than this. We have lately entered upon an existence which shall never end. Our present life is

“The bud of being, the dim dawn,  
The twilight of our day, the vestibule.  
Life’s theatre as yet is shut, and Death,  
Strong Death, alone can heave the massy bar.”

And yet, upon the proper improvement of this first brief period of our existence depends all that shall come after! Yes, our character is now in a state of formation, and everything we think or do exerts its influence in giving it shape and complexion; and when death comes, the process ceases, the character is stamped, and the state of the soul is fixed forever. “As the tree falls so it must lie;” “As death leaves us judgment will overtake us;” for, according to the Scriptures, no sooner is the silver cord loosed and the golden bowl broken, than the decree of an immutable God rolls over the shrouded form: “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still.” Here is a Christian dying—his warfare is accomplished, his trials are ended—the time is, at least, arrived for him to lay down his armor, and, the battle won, to enjoy the repose of victory forever. Over his head hangs the crown, and around him are the angels of God, who are ready, as ministering spirits, to conduct him to his home in the skies! But is it a sinner breathing his last? O dreadful to think upon! His day of grace is ended; the angel of mercy has spread its wings; the door is shut,

and the gloom of an eternal night is setting upon his poor lost soul—yea, demons of the pit hover around him, and already has he entered the vestibule of the prison-house of the damned! Ah me! to think of never having the star of hope lighted up any more, nor the day of grace renewed! Who can bear the thought? My brethren, this is our working time; O then let one and all be persuaded to work while the day lasts, knowing that “the night cometh when no man can work.”

My brethren in the ministry—I see several around me\*—our calling is a high calling; our work is emphatically a great work.

“’Tis not a cause of small import,  
A preacher’s care demands,  
But what might fill an angel’s heart,  
And filled a Saviour’s hands.”

We are sent to arouse the thoughtless, to reclaim the vicious, to awaken those who are slumbering in their sins, and to bring wanderers home to Christ. In other words, we are sent forth to sound the tocsin of alarm, and to do what we can to save souls from going down to the pit! O, how much do we need the spirit of our Master—his spirit of love and self-denial, his spirit of devotion and quenchless zeal. Brethren, let us lay out our whole strength in our Master’s service. We are engaged in a great work, a blessed work, a glorious work, and rich will be the reward of grace which shall be bestowed upon the faithful and successful minister of Christ; for thus it is written: “They that be wise, shall shine as the brightness

\*This sermon was preached at the close of a protracted meeting.



of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars, forever and ever!" O what high rewards and immortal honors await those whose ruling passion on earth has been love to Christ and love to souls; who, amid a thousand hardships and trials incident to their office, have been enabled to say, with Paul, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Brethren, with some of us "it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." O, how happy, if when we come to die, we may be able to say, with our Master, in our humble measure, "Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do;" and, with Paul, exclaim, in the language of joy and triumph, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me in that day." Brethren in the ministry, we may never meet on earth any more. Permit this parting charge from one who has been in the ministry many years: Give yourselves up wholly to the blessed work of the ministry; your working time is an appointed time; therefore, work while the day lasts, "for the night cometh, when no man can work."

Ruling elders, you, too, are office-bearers in the Church of Christ. You, too, have an important work to do, and if you are active and zealous, you may do much to save

souls, and build up the Church of Christ, where God has cast your lot. Let your language be,

“I love thy kingdom, Lord,  
The house of thine abode,  
The church my bless'd Redeemer saved,  
With his own precious blood,

And, if at any time the ways of Zion mourn, and few come to her solemn feasts, say, with the pious captive Jew, by the river of Babylon, “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning: if I prefer thee not to my chief joy, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.” Ruling elders, respected and beloved in the Lord, your vows are recorded; and the eye of heaven is upon you; be active as servants of Christ and office-bearers in his Church; work while the day lasts, for “the night cometh when no man can work.”

Beloved Sabbath-school teachers, you are engaged in a work which the angels of God themselves might delight in! Be not weary in well doing, for in due season you shall reap, if you faint not. May the children whom you instruct rise up and call you blessed in the morning of the resurrection. Remember, the time is coming, when you will not be seen in the Sabbath-school room any more! Work, therefore, while the day lasts, for “the night cometh, when no man can work.”

Parents, God has given you children, and with each child this charge: Take this child, and bring it up for me, and I will give you your wages. These children are your jewels; take good care of them. They have immortal souls; see to it that you train them up in the way in which they should go—point them to heaven.

"Try each tender art, reprove each dull delay;  
Allure to brighter worlds and lead the way."

Whether you choose it or not, your precepts and example will exert a powerful influence in forming and stamping the character of your children. Remember the case of Eli, who neglected parental duty, and reason over the overwhelming sorrows which came upon him in consequence thereof. For your own sake, and the sake of your children, see to it that you bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and above all things, be careful to set before them a good and pious example. Many parents will in heaven have their children as stars in their crown of rejoicing. May you be of that happy number. Soon the time for exerting parental influence will be over and gone forever. Only a little while, you and your children too will be sleeping under the clods of the valley. Therefore, work while the day lasts, for "the night cometh, when no man can work."

Professed disciples of Christ—you, too, have a work to perform. You have been brought unto the vineyard, some of you, perhaps, even at the eleventh hour. You are not to be loiterers—"Why stand ye here all the day idle?" Time is precious; and if your hearts are right in the sight of God, you may do much good in your day and generation. According to the Scriptures, you are to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works. You have around you many who are the enemies of the cross of Christ; over them you are to weep. You are to do what you can to reclaim the vicious, reform the intemperate, and bring wanderers home to Christ. Leave not this

blessed work wholly to those who are office-bearers in the Church. It is the privilege of every member of the Church, nay, their bounden duty, "to come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty." Even the humblest and the youngest are not excused. The Syrians, we are told, had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid, and she waited upon Naaman's wife; and she said unto her mistress, "Would God, my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy." Now this little captive maid made a suggestion that issued in curing Naaman, the Syrian chieftain, of his leprosy. Even so, there is not an individual present who may not be instrumental in doing good, much good. There are energies in the bosom of the Church, but alas! those energies are slumbering. O, if every member of the Church would but be as zealous and active as they should be—if every talent were laid out for the glory of God, how great would be the result! It would be seen in the enlargement of the Church and the correction of a thousand evils.

My dear Christian brethren, suffer a word of exhortation. According to the Scriptures, you are not your own; you have been bought with a price—and only think, with the precious blood of God's dear Son! Have you not, at the table of the Lord, recognized this great fact? Have you not frequently, and in circumstances of great solemnity, consecrated yourselves, your time, your talents, your property, your influence, all to the service of God? Is it not your duty to have a disposition every morning,



and on all occasions, to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Are you called upon to give—"Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Are you called upon to engage in any service for the church, or to practice any self-denial, or to make any sacrifice, there should be no holding back; but still let the inquiry be, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Some persons will give a certain amount, and say, I can give this sum, and not feel it. Are you sure it is not your duty to give something more, and feel it? Remember, the Saviour felt what he did for you. Some persons, when called upon to discharge some unpleasant duty, are too ready to say, "I pray thee have me excused." Ah, me! if this had been the spirit of our blessed Redeemer, what would have become of our ruined race? O, if all who have named the name of Christ would only do what they might in the cause of virtue, of religion, and of God, surely their influence would be happily felt in every place and every department of life: "One might chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." My dear Christian brethren, God might convert the world by the instrumentality of angels, or without any instrumentality at all; but he sees proper to roll this duty upon the Church. Let us, then, be awake to our duty; and O, let us be up and a-doing! Let us work while the day lasts, for "the night cometh, when no man can work."

But are there not some present who are impenitent sinners? And have they not also a work to perform, a great work?—and lo! they have not yet even entered upon it. Sinner, this work must be done, or you cannot enter

the heavenly world. It must be done, and done whilst on earth, or you will be lost to all eternity! O, did you ever think what it is to be cut off from heaven? Did you ever think what it is to be lost to all eternity? O eternity! eternity! Think—no end! no end! When embosomed in eternity, you are done with earth forever! You cannot come back to act your part over. Sinner, I tremble for you! You have a work to do—a great, great work. God has given you a day in which to perform this work, and much of this day is already gone. Perhaps your sun of life is already near its setting, and you have not yet even entered upon your work. What meanest thou, O sleeper? With what astonishment must angels gaze upon you, slumbering upon the very brink of everlasting ruin! Immortal man, take care of your soul! Only think, if the angel of death should now touch you, you are gone forever! O, be persuaded to bestir yourself—this may be your last call! Your sun may be just going down! Therefore, “Work while the day lasts, for the night cometh, when no man can work.”

# REVIVAL SERMONS.

## SECOND SERIES.

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### SERMON I.

#### PRECIOUS FAITH.

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have attained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 PETER 1. 1.

THE faith here called *precious*, is saving faith, or the faith of God's elect, and very truly may this be termed "*precious* faith." It is remarkable, my brethren, what stress is laid upon faith in the sacred volume. It is wonderful how prominent a place it is made to occupy in the system of divine revelation. The word *faith*, and its kindred terms, to *believe* and *trust*, are scattered over the sacred page like stars in the firmament of heaven! How common, for example, are such expressions as these: Have faith in God—the just shall live by faith—we walk by faith—justified by faith—sanctified by faith—great faith—common faith—precious faith. And how common are such phrases as these: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—Dost thou believe on the Son of God?—Dost thou now believe? With regard to the equivalent term, *trust*, how common, particularly in the Old Testament! All per-

sons who are familiar with their Bibles, must also be familiar with such expressions as these: They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion—O house of Israel, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. And again: He shall lift up a standard to the gentiles, and in him shall the gentiles trust.

And now, what is this faith, belief, or trust, so much spoken of, and upon which so much stress is laid in the sacred volume? Sad mistakes, fatal mistakes, have been made on the subject. Let us see to it, then, that we understand it clearly, that we understand it thoroughly.

Faith, in general, may be defined to be, credit given to the declaration or promise of another on the authority of him who makes it; a full persuasion that what is affirmed is true, that what is promised will be performed. When Moses said unto Pharoah, "Behold, to-morrow, about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail. Send now, therefore, and gather thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them and they shall die." He that *believed* the word of the Lord, among the servants of Pharoah, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses, and he that *believed not*, left his servants and his cattle in the field.

Having said thus much touching the nature of faith in



general, and its common operations, I wish now to call your attention to *faith in Christ*, the thing particularly referred to in our text; and which is so correctly and emphatically denominated precious faith. Take this view of the matter. There are certain declarations of the eternal God, touching man as a sinner in a lost and ruined state, such as these:—God hath concluded all under sin, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God:—Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that sinneth:—and, By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight;—the amount of which is simply this: that the sinner is (in and of himself) in a lost condition, ruined and undone; and cannot save himself, any more than he can roll a mountain, or heave an ocean. This we are to believe as true, strictly true.

And now for the corresponding promise. “Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; and he that believeth in him shall not be ashamed.” (Compare Isaiah xxviii. 16; Rom. ix. 33, x. 11, and 2 Pet. ii. 6, 9; Matt. xi. 28.) And again, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The idea is this: that those who, thoroughly convinced of their lost and ruined condition as sinners, shall come to Christ, that is, shall receive him in the arms of an appropriating faith, shall be accepted, shall be pardoned, shall be saved. Hence the language of our Shorter Catechism: “Faith is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel.”

But that faith which is properly termed *precious* faith, must be distinguished from two things which are sometimes taken for it.

First. It must be distinguished from *presumption*. True faith is founded upon some divine promise; presumption has no such warrant. When the children of Israel passed through the opened channel of the Red Sea, they had a promise of protection; hence the apostle says: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned." The children of Israel had a promise the Egyptians had not; and therefore, whilst in the one case it was an act of faith, in the other it was an act of presumption. Take another illustration. Gideon, with a band of only three hundred men, went against the Midianites, a great army. This, in ordinary circumstances, would have been most daring and presumptuous, but really was nothing more than a simple act of faith, for the Lord had expressly said unto him, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand."

On the other hand, when the children of Israel, relying upon their numbers, went up against the Amalekites, this was an act of presumption, for they had no promise of success. On the contrary, Joshua said: "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you." Yet they went, and what was the result? What may be expected in every case of presumption; they met with shame and defeat. "And the Amalekites came down and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah." Num. xiv. 45.

My brethren, if we have a divine promise, we may ven-

ture anything, even the salvation of our souls; but we must beware how we venture upon anything without a divine warrant. Some persons, because they are not profane, nor intemperate, nor fraudulent, because they are as good as the majority of mankind, imagine that they have no cause of alarm in relation to their future state; but where is the promise that such shall be saved? There is none. On the contrary, there are many passages of this kind; "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned;" and, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Beware how you cherish hopes not well founded! Beware how you presume even upon the mercy of God, without some clear and express divine warrant! And now, whilst we positively affirm that all who die impenitent will perish, and all who go down to the grave without a Saviour must be damned, we gladly and confidently say, that if the sinner truly repent, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be forgiven, and saved! Yes, no matter how numerous and aggravated his sins may have been, even though they have been of a crimson color, and a scarlet dye, if he will indeed break off his sins by repentance, and his iniquities by turning unto the Lord, he will, most assuredly, be pardoned and accepted, justified and saved. Why do we affirm this? There is a divine warrant—there is an express promise, for thus it is written: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. lv. 7.

Here you perceive is the promise of a God that cannot lie. Let the sinner then take God at his word. Let him repent and believe—let him fall in with Heaven's plan; and, as sure as the word of the Lord is true, his sins will all be blotted out, and remembered against him no more forever!

Second. True or precious faith must be distinguished from that faith which is only speculative or historical; and, say not that this is "making a distinction without a difference." The distinction is great. The one is confined to the head; the other has to do with the heart also. As it is written, "*With the heart* man believeth unto righteousness."

And again, when the Eunuch said to Philip, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest *with all thine heart*, thou mayest." "A distinction without a difference!" Is not one called a *living*, and the other a *dead* faith? And is there no difference between a thing that is living and a thing that is dead? Here is a tree, having green foliage, bearing good fruit—and there is a tree without a single leaf, and whose branches are dry and dead. Is there no difference between the one and the other? Here is a man alive; his eyes are sparkling, his cheeks are flushed with health, and the springs of life and health are strong within. There is a man pale and cold in death, wrapped in the winding-sheet, and prepared for the burying. His eyes are closed, they cannot see; his ears are heavy, they cannot hear; his tongue is dumb, it cannot speak; his heart is cold, it cannot feel. Is there no difference be-



tween this man living, and that man dead? The difference is immense. Even so is it with that faith which is saving, and that which is not. True faith, according to the apostle, works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. Observe, this faith is an active principle. It *works*—and mark! it works by *love*. It wakes up the affections of the heart—stirs up all the dormant feelings of the soul. But true faith is not only an active principle; it is a *powerful* principle. It overcomes the world—overcomes all its smiles and all its frowns, all its temptations and all its allurements.

In the eleventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews we have a glowing account of the trials and the triumphs of faith. After showing its mighty power in the case of Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and many other illustrious ones of ancient days, (of whom the world was not worthy)—the apostle breaks out in this language: "And, what shall I more say? For the time would fail to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and Jephthah, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong; waxed valiant in fight; turned to flight the armies of the aliens." And thus the apostle goes on speaking of faith as a powerful, triumphant, victorious principle, braving all dangers; meeting all difficulties; triumphant in every hour of trial; and if I mistake not, the apostle himself furnishes a striking example

of the power of faith in his own case, when he exclaimed, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong." And now, who can confound such a working, heart-stirring, soul-rousing principle as this, with a cold, speculative, heartless faith, which, wanting the principle of vitality, is for all practical purposes dead and of no value?

And here I may just make a passing remark. Some of those who are wont to confound a living with a dead faith, are wont also to confound a water-baptism with regeneration. How absurd! for if they are, indeed, one and the same thing, then when Paul said, "*I baptized* none of you but Crispus and Gaius; and I *baptized* also the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not that I *baptized* any other;" he might have said, I *regenerated* none of you but Crispus and Gaius. I *regenerated* also the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not that I *regenerated* any other. 1 Cor. i. 14-16. And again, when the Evangelist says, "But Jesus *baptized* not, but his disciples;" we may read it thus, But Jesus *regenerated* not, but his disciples. As "woes cluster," so error never comes alone. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Let it be remembered, then, that *that* faith which is true, or precious faith, is widely different both from presumption and from that faith which is cold and heartless. Presumption has no divine warrant; and what is called speculative or historical faith, may be possessed by the vilest of men, and even by devils; as it is written, "the devils also believe and tremble." True faith works by love; but devils cannot love.

Having thus made a proper distinction between that faith which is truly precious and that which is not, I will now proceed to mention some reasons why the faith spoken of in our text may emphatically be termed *precious*.

I. *It adds greatly to our stock of knowledge.* It gives us information of a peculiarly important character; and information, too, which could be obtained in no other way. For faith soars where reason cannot soar; and faith teaches where reason is struck dumb! "By faith," says the apostle, "*we understand* that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Reason, in this case, could have given me no certain knowledge. Arguing from the axiom of some ancient philosophers, that "from nothing nothing can come," I might conclude that the world existed from all eternity; or, with some others, adopting another theory, I might think that the world, as it now is, was simply the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. But, as each of these theories is environed with immense difficulties, without a divine revelation, I can have no certain knowledge upon the subject: but the Bible tells me distinctly that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" not only so, but the Bible tells me the process of creation, or the manner and order in which the present system, or arrangement, came into existence. Believing the word of God, knowing that this is true, I know all about the origin of things; and it is to me substantially the same as if I had, with the angels, been hovering over the

scene, and had been an eye-witness of the whole. Having full faith in the word of God, I am just as certain of the fact stated, as if I had seen it with my own eyes. Is this strange? Is this irrational? By no means. I never was in London; I never saw Queen Victoria; and yet I know that there is such a city as London, and I also know that there is such a Queen. In the late war with Mexico I had no part; I did not see our gallant soldiers drawn up in battle array; I did not witness the conflict of battle, nor did I see them reposing in the arms of victory; and yet I know all about the matter. I know that they both fought and conquered; I could not have had any more certain knowledge of the fact if I had been actually present, and been a spectator of the scene. My belief in testimony gives me knowledge.

Just so in relation to matters spread before me in the sacred volume. For example: By faith, I understand that there is only one living and true God; by faith, I understand that God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions. By faith, I understand that God hath concluded all under sin, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. By faith, I understand that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. By faith I understand that after death comes the judgment, and that the hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to



the resurrection of damnation. These, and many other things of like importance, are communicated to us in the sacred volume. By faith, they become matters of knowledge; and this knowledge having reference to matters of infinite importance, and which could not have been made known by reason, or the eye of sense, O how precious is that faith which puts us in possession of this knowledge! Precious faith! But,

II. *It adds greatly to our store of wealth; it makes us rich: it causes us to inherit all things.* Yes, not only all things really good for us in this world, but also in that which is to come. Faith says, and says truly, "the Lord God is a sun and a shield. The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." The believer may have neither silver nor gold; and yet he is rich indeed! for he has that with which he would not part for all the treasures of the earth, or for all the world calls good or great. But his chief possessions are on high, and in time of need he can draw largely from that source. So teaches the apostle. "Faith," says he, "is the substance of things hoped for." That is, it gives a present subsistence to heavenly things; it brings them near. Hence the poet, in speaking of this property of faith, says:

"The want of sight she well supplies,  
She makes the pearly gates appear;  
Far into distant worlds she pries,  
And brings eternal glories near."

Aye, and this she does in such a way that, as Bunyan describes it, the Christian is "in heaven before he arrives

at it"—having sometimes, even on earth, heaven let down into his soul, or as another beautifully expresses it, "Heaven begun below, and glory in the bud." Believe me, brethren, this is no fancy affair. It is a blessed and sweet reality, as many can testify, by their own happy experience. The case of Edward Payson is in point, for during his last sickness, writing to a relative, he thus speaks: "Were I to use the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah; for the celestial city seems to be now full in view. Its breezes fan me; its odors are wafted to me; its music falls upon my ear; its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing now separates me from that happy world but death, which seems only as an insignificant rill, which may be crossed at a step, whenever God shall give command." Yes, my brethren, when faith is strong, its visions are as clear as those of sight, and, in this way, oftentimes it enables the believer to rise above all the sorrows of this life, and anticipate the joys of the paradise of God. It is even so:

"The men of grace have found  
Glory begun below:  
Celestial fruits on earthly ground  
From faith and hope may grow."

Now, that faith by which the believer is enabled to pitch his tent in the land of Beulah, and so to speak, "be in heaven before he arrives at it," is surely of great value, and may well be called precious faith. O! that it were more common. It would lighten the heaviest burden, soften the hardest bed, sweeten the bitterest cup, and

brighten the darkest scene! O! give me this faith, this precious faith, and my song in the house of my pilgrimage will be the song of the Psalmist: Thou shalt guide me with thy counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory! O! give me this faith, this precious faith, and my shout in a dying hour will be the shout of the conqueror, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Precious faith!

III. *It is the title-bond of our future inheritance*—the evidence or proof of our being the heirs of heaven. This seems to be the precise idea of the apostle when, after affirming that faith is the "substance of things hoped for," he adds, "the evidence of things not seen." That is, it is the proof or demonstration of the fact. Take an illustration: This man receives an appointment to some high office under government. Here is the document. It is signed by the governor, and bears the great seal of the State. In all respects it is properly authenticated. Here is the evidence of the appointment—the full proof of the fact. The appointment is his, just as certainly his as if the governor were present, and had inaugurated him into that office. But, take another case: You give me a deed to a tract of land in the State of Maine, where I have never been. It is duly signed, duly witnessed; everything is according to law; that land is mine; I have never walked over that tract—I have never seen it. It matters not; that tract of land is as certainly mine as if I had bought it with my own money, and had walked over it a thousand times. I have the deed, the evidence of the

fact; that which entitles me to full possession. Just so in the case before us. It is written, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Now this faith secures salvation to the true believer. It is the title-bond or evidence of his being an heir of heaven. But, as the appointment or deed spoken of must be authenticated, that it may be known to be true and genuine, so must this faith be authenticated, or proved to be genuine. How? The apostle tells us, "To you that believe, Christ is precious." Is Christ then precious to your soul? This proves that you do believe; and truly believing, you have the word of God for it that you shall be saved. But, as an appointment or deed is authenticated in various ways, so we may mention another way to prove that our title-bond to heaven is good. It is written, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Now observe our train of reasoning: If there be no condemnation, our sins are pardoned; if pardoned, of course we are the children of God, and heirs of heaven. But how am I to know that there is no condemnation for me? I have evidence that I am in Christ. But how am I to know that I am in Christ? The Bible tells me—"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away, all things are become new." Well, I am a new man. I have new views, new feelings, new desires, new joys, new sorrows. I have a new relish. What I once loved I now hate; what I once hated I now love. Yes, in all my views and feelings, in all my tastes and habits, I am a *new* man. My title-bond, so to speak, is now duly signed and sealed. Now, although I have



never been in heaven, or seen its glories with my mortal eyes, unwavering faith in the word of God gives me an assurance, which fully satisfies my mind, and enables me, even now, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Precious faith!

IV. *Faith honors God and pleases him.* A very striking example, or proof, of this is found in the case of Abraham. He staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. How? The apostle tells us. "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." The circumstances of the case are these: God had promised Abraham that he should have a numerous posterity, and that in Isaac his seed should be blessed. Now mark the trial and triumphs of Abraham's faith. "When Abraham was now old, and his wife also well stricken in age, God called unto him, and said, Abraham, and he answered, Behold, here I am. And the Lord said unto him, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of."

O! what a command was this! Must Isaac, his son, his only and beloved son, must *he* be offered as a burnt-offering? and must this be done by Abraham himself? May not the offering be made by another hand? No, Abraham must do it himself—and do it without delay! "Take *now* thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him for

a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of." What a trial to parental feeling, and what a severe trial of his faith! Was not Isaac the child of promise, and if he were slain, how could the promise be fulfilled? Abraham could not tell, nor did he trouble himself about the matter. God had promised; that was enough. Is anything too hard for God? Could he not do all things? Could he not even raise Isaac again from the dead? At any rate, Abraham was resolved to obey his Maker, and trust his word.

And what did Abraham? "He rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto the young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto his father, and said, My Father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" What a question from a darling boy! How it must have pierced the heart of the old patriarch! "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his

son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood; and he took the knife to slay his son." What an act of triumphant faith was this! But this is enough. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham! Abraham! and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me, therefore, in blessing I will bless thee; and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Thus Abraham honored God, and pleased him. Yes, faith not only honors God, but pleases him. This idea must not be left out of view. What says the apostle concerning Enoch? "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The case of Enoch, according to a Jewish tradition, was this: Enoch lived in a time of abounding iniquity. He was a bold reprovcr. His life was threatened; but God commanded him to denounce judgments upon the wicked around him; assuring him

that they should not be permitted to do him any harm. Accordingly he, in the midst of a raging multitude, lifted up his voice, and said: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon you all." Upon this they rushed upon him, to put him to death; but suddenly the heavens were opened, and in the view of all he was snatched away! "was translated that he should not see death."

Now that faith which thus honors and pleases God, must surely be of great value; must be precious indeed! O! that we had more of this precious faith in this our day! Let each Christian now lift up his heart, and say: Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief! Lord increase my faith! Precious faith! But again:

V. *Faith unites to Christ, in our effectual calling.* It binds the soul of the believer to Christ in bonds never to be broken. This is its chief excellence—this is its crowning glory; for what can the ivy do without the oak? and what can such poor sinners as we are do without a Saviour? But faith not only links the soul to Christ, but creates a union, mysterious and divine. Is Jesus Christ the vine? Believers are the branches. Is Jesus Christ the head? Believers are the members. Is Jesus Christ the bridegroom? Believers are the bride. Nay, the apostle uses language, if possible, stronger still; for, says he, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones!" Precious faith! uniting us to Christ, it makes us partakers of his righteousness; and possessed of this, our peace is made with God, and we are safe and happy for ever, for thus it is written: "There is therefore now no



condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." And again : " Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ : by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Precious faith ! How precious it must be in a day of trouble ! O ! how precious in a dying hour !

And now, in closing :—How very simple and beautiful is the way of salvation ! We are not required to traverse oceans, nor scale mountains, nor study abstruse sciences. We are not required to go on a pilgrimage to the tomb of some prophet, or the shrine of some martyr. What says the Saviour ? " As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up ; that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And again, the Saviour, knowing how prone many persons are to stumble at the simplicity of the way of salvation, comes over the same ground, in the very next verse ; for, says he, " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In accordance with this, when the trembling, convicted jailor at Philippi, propounded to Paul and Silas that important inquiry, " O sirs, what must I do to be saved ?" the prompt reply was, " Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Yes, *faith in Christ* is the grand requisite. This is heaven's plan, and let none stumble at its simplicity, for every thing that God does is marked with simplicity. If you and I had the lighting up of the world, what a complicated machinery we would have ! How

many torches and lamps! and the world would not be well lighted up then. But God proposes to light up the world, and mark! one brilliant sun, like an urn of overflowing light, pours day, beauteous day, upon the world. How much better than all our torches and lamps! Even so, all the efforts of all the men in the world cannot save one sinner from the damnation of hell! But, thank God! one loving Jesus, one dear, dying Christ, can save millions! Aye, can save millions crowding upon millions!—*Can* save, and *will* save, ALL who will cordially receive him as he is offered in the gospel! And now, if there be a burdened sinner present who desires salvation, let him remember the words of the blessed Saviour, already recited, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” This is a beam of light divine. This is the gospel in miniature! And, if the whole Bible were destroyed, and this fragment only left, we would have enough to point out our pathway to heaven. Remember the language is the language of the Saviour himself, and his illustration is most striking and to the point. The children of Israel were bitten by fiery serpents; the venom was deadly. Moses could not heal them; the elders of Israel could not heal them, nor could they heal themselves. God alone could meet the case. And, accordingly, in the plenitude of his mercy, he directs Moses to prepare a brazen serpent, and lift it upon a pole, and pledged the veracity of a God, that whosoever, when bitten, should look, should live. Here is a man bitten! O!

send for Moses—send for the elders! They come. What is the matter? A serpent has bitten me, and I am in agony—I am dying! Moses, help me! I can't help you, says Moses. Elders of Israel, help a dying man! We can't help you. What is to be done? Must I die? O no, says Moses; yonder is God's remedy; only look, and you shall live. The dying man, as the last resort, turns his dying eyes; they look upon the serpent, and instantly he springs up, and exclaims in the joy of his heart, I am cured! I am a sound man! Well, says Moses, this is just what God has said, Look and you shall live. Even so, one look of faith at the blessed Redeemer, and the sinner is converted! One look of faith at the great atoning sacrifice, and his sins are all forgiven! Yea, one look of faith at the dear, dying Christ, and the universe is changed in relation to the sinner, and there are shoutings in heaven over him:—"The dead is alive, and the lost is found again." Yes, this is the way of salvation, as it is written, "Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside me there is none else." And again, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Travelling as a missionary once, I came to a house of entertainment. Although an utter stranger, I was, when known to be a minister, invited to hold family worship. I read in the third chapter of the Gospel of John, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth verse; and in commenting upon the portion read, I remarked that the way of salvation was very simple. The case was simply this: The sinner is lost; he can no more save himself than he

can roll a mountain, or heave an ocean. He is not required to save himself. A Saviour, an all-sufficient and most precious Saviour, is provided; and if the sinner will only cordially accept of him, as he is freely offered in the gospel, he shall be saved. A daughter of the man of the house, had, as it seems, been under serious impressions for two long years; but, as yet, had obtained no hope. She listened to my remarks; she drank in every word, and was much wrought upon. During prayer she wept; and as she rose to her feet, at the conclusion of the prayer, she exclaimed, "I have found my Saviour! O, my father, my mother," said she, "I have found my blessed Saviour!" "Well," said I, "Is Jesus Christ a precious Saviour?" "O!" replied she, "he is the blesseddest Saviour that ever was." "Well, what would you take for your hope?" "I would not take the whole world," said she, "all in silver and gold." Awakened sinner! stumble not at the simplicity of the way of salvation. Remember, it is written, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is true—it is divinely true. O! be persuaded to fall in with this plan of salvation.— "Believe, and take the promised rest; obey, and be for ever blest," PRECIOUS FAITH!



## SERMON II.

## THE FULFILMENT OF SCRIPTURE PROPHECY.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—2 PETER i. 21.

WHEN the apostle Peter wrote this, his second and last epistle, being aware that he must soon go the way of all the earth, he seems to have been particularly desirous that his Christian brethren should distinctly bear in mind one thing—that they had “not followed cunningly devised fables;” that the Saviour whom they received was indeed the predicted Messiah, and consequently the religion which he promulged was true—was divinely true. With regard to himself, if there were no other evidence of the fact, the transfiguration scene was of itself sufficiently convincing, for he was an eye-witness of his majesty, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, saying, “this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” “But,” continues he, “we have more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts.” The main idea here seems to be this: while the miraculous attestation given to the character of Christ on the mount of transfiguration was abundantly sufficient to satisfy himself and others who were eye-witnesses on the occasion, it might not be convincing to such as had not been present, and therefore he refers them to what he denominates the

more sure word of prophecy,—more sure, because more capable of being more deliberately and severely tested. You perceive, my brethren, that the apostle lays great stress upon prophecy, as furnishing a powerful argument for the truth of the Christian religion; and I am free to say that I do think it furnishes an argument which can neither be gainsayed nor resisted an argument which can bear the most thorough examination, and which will stand the “test of scrutiny, of talents and of time.”

I. In relation to Abraham, when he was aged, and yet childless, and Sarah his wife also well stricken in age, it was predicted that his seed should be exceedingly numerous. “If,” said God, “a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered.” About four hundred years after this, the children of Israel (only a portion of his posterity) came out of Egypt, and encamped in the plains of Moab, an exceeding great multitude. Balak, king of Moab, alarmed for the safety of his dominions, sends for Balaam, the prophet of Aram—and mark what is said: “Behold there is a people come out of Egypt: behold they cover the face of the earth! Come now, I pray thee, and curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me.” When Balaam came, having erected his altars and offered sacrifices, he took up his parable and said:—Mark his language!—“Balak, king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the East, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not

defied? From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him! Lo, this people shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations! Who can count the dust of Jacob, or the number of the fourth part of Israel?" Here you perceive that the thing which particularly struck the prophet of Aram was the exceeding great number of the people spread out before him.

But there is another prophecy in relation to Abraham, which is perhaps still more remarkable. It is this: *I will make thy name great in the earth.* Now, let it be remembered, that when this language was uttered Abraham was but a plain man, dwelling in tents. He was no statesman, no warrior; he was no poet, no orator. There was nothing about him which promised to twine around his brow the laurels of fame; nothing whatever which seemed calculated to stamp his character with immortality. He was only, as we have said, a plain man, dwelling in tents; and yet it was predicted that his name should be great in the earth. And has not this prophecy been literally fulfilled? Is not his name great in the earth at the present time? Has it not been great for, lo! these many thousand years? Most of the nations of the East endeavor to trace up their genealogy to this wonderful man. With regard to the Jews, his lineal descendants, we all know how proud they are of him as their great progenitor; and even we gentile Christians, made the children of Abraham by faith, even we also have for him a most profound veneration. Tell me, my brethren, who and where is the man, and in what

age did he ever live, whose name is to be compared with that of Abraham? We have heard of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, and Pompey the Great, and Alexander the Great, and Herod, and Frederick, and Napoleon the Great, but the name of Abraham is far greater than each—far greater than all! Is not this remarkable? Is it not strong proof of the inspiration of the sacred volume? Young man, your mother is right! The Bible is true. Beware how you slight it! It will cost you your soul!

II. In Genesis ix. 27, we have a very remarkable prophecy, uttered by Noah: "God shall enlarge Japheth: he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." The first thing, in relation to this prophecy, which we would notice, is this, that here, in three sentences, embracing only twenty words, Noah sketches the outline of the history of the whole human race, descending from his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth." Notice each prediction: "God shall enlarge Japheth." Dr. Scott says that Japheth seems to have been the progenitor of more than one-half of the human family! Besides occupying a large part of Asia, they spread over all Europe. They swarm in the West India Islands, and nearly cover all America, north and south. Thus in exact accordance with the prophecy, God *has* enlarged Japheth. But it is also said, "he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Now, whether this prophecy has relation to political or religious privileges, it has been most remarkably fulfilled. It is well known, that political power has, to a great extent, passed over from the children of Shem to the children of Japheth; and in religious matters also, (the gos-



pel, for example,) we see with our own eyes that Japheth has supplanted Shem. The Jews, for their unbelief, have been cut off, and we gentiles, and children of Japheth, have been brought in. The aborigines of this country, beyond all doubt, are the children of Shem; and have not the children of Japheth, passing over from the Old World here on this Western Continent, literally taken possession of the tents of Shem? Where your house now stands was once an Indian wigwam; and where our cities now rise in splendor, were seen, two centuries ago, the villages of the red men of the West. Yes, by treaty and by conquest, by fair means and foul means, the children of Japheth have lorded it over the children of Shem, and are at this very time dwelling in their tents. But the prophet adds, "and Canaan shall be his servant." And, where, I would ask, do those in servitude chiefly come from, if not from Africa, the home of Ham, the father of Canaan? Ham, it seems, has never shaken a sceptre over Japheth. Shem has subdued Japheth, and Japheth has subdued Shem; but Ham has subdued neither. And thus we see that each item of Noah's prophecy has been most remarkably fulfilled. "God shall enlarge Japheth; he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." How is this to be accounted for? Peter tells us; "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

III. The next remarkable prophecy to which I shall call your attention, is found in Exodus xxxiv. 24: "Neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up

to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year." By reference to the context, it will be seen that Moses had given directions, that when the children of Israel had taken possession of the promised land, there should be a gathering together of the men, from all their coasts, to worship at one altar thrice in every year. Anticipating an objection which might very naturally be made, that this would hold out a temptation to lawless and predatory bands to take advantage of the occasion to rob and plunder, Moses, to set them at rest upon this point, utters the bold prophecy recited: "Neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year." Now, this prophecy was either fulfilled, or not fulfilled. If not, how shall we account for the fact—the well known fact—that year after year, and age after age, the males did go up to Jerusalem with their offerings, as directed. Suppose, for example, relying upon the protecting providence of God, promised by Moses, they had gone up, and upon their return, had found that this protecting providence had not been vouchsafed, think you that they would have gone up again? I suspect not. They would have seen that an imposition of a very serious character had been practised upon them; and one imposition of this kind would have sufficed. They would have gone up and left their families and possessions defenceless no more. Now, the question is, how could Moses, how could any uninspired man, have foreseen that such a remarkable (may I not say miraculous) providence would be spreading its protecting shield over them year after year? This is truly a very remarkable case,

and is worthy of the serious thought of every sceptic in the land. It furnishes an argument for the truth of the Bible, which I humbly conceive cannot be set aside. Yes, the Bible is true! Thank God, it comes to us with "credentials clear," "on every line marked with the seal of high divinity."

IV. In the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, from the 24th verse to the close of that chapter, we have a rich cluster of prophecies in relation to the Messiah. We will point out only two or three, and those the fulfilment of which is remarkably clear and manifest. 1. It was predicted that he, the true Messiah, when he came, should cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. Was not this a very strange prediction? Shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. Were not these of divine appointment? Did they not form the very sum and substance of the Jew's religion? How unlikely was the fulfilment of this prediction! And yet, has it not been literally fulfilled? Christ, by his death upon the cross, superseded the necessity of all the Levitical sacrifices under the law. "It is finished," said he, as he bowed his head upon the cross, and the old dispensation then passed away. No acceptable sacrifice was offered after that: aye, and soon the very altar was demolished—and lo! the sacrificial fire has been quenched for these eighteen hundred years! It is well known that sacrifices and offerings were permitted to be made in Jerusalem only. This holy city, having passed over into the hands of the gentiles, the sacrifice and offering have literally ceased, even down to the present day, so that we can now see the fulfilment of this prophecy with our own eyes.

But another prediction is this: "He shall seal up the vision and the prophecy." That is, shall close the sacred canon. Turn to the last chapter of the book of Revelation, and you will find these words: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." And mark who the speaker is: "I Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Here you perceive the blessed Saviour, the true Messiah, (just as it was predicted so long time ago,) with authority, closes the sacred canon. It is true—the papal council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, had the hardihood and daring wickedness to add the Apocrypha, (books which the Jews themselves never received as inspired,) and what was this? Evidence that the prophecy was not fulfilled by Christ, as the Messiah? Nay, verily, but proof positive that the papal Church, thus trampling upon the authority of Christ, is, in deed and truth, the antichristian power, which itself also was predicted. A third prediction in this connection is this: "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." And who is this prince, in whose day the city and the sanctuary were destroyed? Titus, the Roman commander—was it done by his authority? No, he endeavoured to prevent it. He gave orders to his soldiers to spare the temple; but they were too strong for him. "When they had gotten within the walls of the city," Josephus states, "they were seized with a kind of frenzy, and, hurling firebrands upon that magnificent edifice, it was, with the city, soon laid in ruins." Note the accuracy of the prediction; not the



*prince*, but the *people* of the prince, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. With regard to the seventy weeks spoken of, it is thought to be one of the most remarkable prophecies upon sacred record, and one of those most exactly fulfilled. Almost any commentator will show that the event corresponds to the prediction, to the very letter.

V. In the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, we find another Old Testament prophecy, referring to New Testament times. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed; and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up, as among the grass, and as willows by the water-courses." How descriptive is this of those revival scenes which have so signally characterized gospel times, beginning with the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And, referring to the spreading of religion amongst the gentiles, the prophet adds, "One shall say I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and shall surname himself by the name of Israel." And how descriptive is this also, of what many of us have seen with our own eyes, when in times of revival converts came forward, in crowds, and avouched Jehovah, the God of Israel, to be their covenant God and Father! But, what makes the matter yet more remarkable, is this, that the same prophet tells us that these converts shall be called by another name, and a new name. (See Isaiah lxii. 2. and lxv. 15.) And is not this also even so? Originally the people of God were called "Israelites;" now

they are termed "Christians." And is not this another name? And is it not also a new name? Luke says the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch, Acts xi. 26. And now, my brethren, how can we account for these things? Believe me, P  ter tells us the true way, and there is no other: "Prophecy came not in old time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Surely the Bible is true, is divinely true!

VI. In the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah we have a prophecy rarely adverted to, and yet one that is exceedingly remarkable. "Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me forever, because he hath obeyed the voice of his father." The statement of the case is in substance this:—In the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying: Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers of the priests, and give them wine to drink. And when they were brought in, Jeremiah set before them pots full of wine, and cups, and said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither shall ye build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, nor have any, but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; and we have done according to all that Jonadab, our father, commanded us. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of

Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he commanded you, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab, the son of Rechab, shall not want a man to stand before me forever!—This is the prophecy; now let us trace its fulfilment. Some thirty years ago, Joseph Wolf, a missionary of the East, being in Mesopotamia, whilst conversing with the Jews, saw a man standing a little distance holding a horse by the bridle. “There is one of the Rechabites,” said the Jews. Immediately going up to him, the missionary inquired who he was. “I am Mousa,” said he; and turning to the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, in a Bible which the missionary handed to him, he read in Arabic the whole chapter. “Here,” said he, “is my lineage;” and added, “come with me, and I will show you that we number sixty thousand at the present day!” Saying this he mounted his steed, and, says the missionary, flew with the swiftness of the wind, leaving behind him a standing monument of the fact that “Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” Well did Peter call it a “sure word of prophecy.”

VII. With regard to the prophecies in relation to the Jews, there are none which have been more remarkably fulfilled, but they have been frequently presented; therefore, on the present occasion, I will pass over them very briefly. It was predicted that they should be a peculiar people—and have they not for ages and ages been a peculiar people, and are they not a peculiar people at the present time?—peculiar in their habits and manners; peculiar

in their very looks? It was predicted that they should be scattered—and where is there a nation under heaven where some of this peculiar people are not found? It was predicted that they should be persecuted—only read the history of the Jews, and you will find abundant evidence that this prophecy has been fulfilled to the very letter! It was predicted that they should become a proverb and a by-word—and how common are such sayings as these: “As rich as a Jew:” and, “Take care of that man, he will Jew you.” It was predicted that they should dwell alone, and not be reckoned amongst the nations—and is not this their condition at the present time? and has it not been such, for, lo! these many years? “The children of Israel shall abide many days,” says the prophet, “without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.” Hosea iii. 4, 5. For eighteen hundred years the children of Israel have had no king, no prince, no sacrifice, no image, no ephod, no teraphim, and they now seem evidently awaiting some great event about to take place in these latter days. I do say, that the past history of the Jews, and their present condition, furnish an evidence for the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, which, I am bold to affirm, cannot be overturned or set aside. Young man! I repeat what I said before; your mother is right! The Bible is true! Beware how you make light of it! It will cost you your soul!



VIII. One prophecy more and I have done. It is found in Daniel xii. 4. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." This prophecy is invested with peculiar interest, as, I verily believe, it has special reference to these last days, or the times in which we live. By reference to the context, it will be seen that the prophet speaks of the rising of an antichristian power, which should continue twelve hundred and sixty years; and that about the time of its going down, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." There are two periods from which Protestants usually date the rising of this antichristian power; one is from the year 606, when Boniface III. became universal bishop; and the other is one hundred and fifty years later, in the year 756, when Stephen I., bishop of Rome, was made a temporal prince. Certainly, on each of these occasions, we see the "Man of Sin" looking out. Take the first. In the year 606 the bishop of Rome usurped the title of universal bishop. Was not this in direct opposition to the spirit and teachings of our blessed Saviour? It will be recollected that when, on a certain occasion, the apostles disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest, the Saviour gave them a rebuke which they seem never to have forgotten to their dying day. And it is remarkable that even to the time of Gregory I., only a few years previous to Boniface III., this love of pre-eminence, or spirit of domination, was considered an unequivocal mark of antichrist; for, when the patriarch of Constantinople assumed the name and title of universal bishop, Gregory I. made this remark,

that "Whoever assumes the name or title of universal bishop is antichrist, or the forerunner of antichrist." The bishop of Rome then being judge, the bishop of Rome, assuming, in the year 606, this very title, became antichristian in his character. Reckoning twelve hundred and sixty years from that period, (allowing three hundred and sixty days to the year,) will bring us to the year 1848, a year most memorable in the calendar of time, when the Pope of Rome was driven from his throne, and his tiara made to trail in the dust. Certainly there was then a blow given to that power, which, to say the least, marked a new and most disastrous era in the history of the Church of Rome. The other period from which we usually date the rising of this antichristian power is, as we have said, one hundred and fifty years later, when Stephen I., bishop of Rome, became a temporal prince. And it must be confessed that then the features of the Man of Sin were much more clearly and distinctly marked. A temporal prince! A temporal prince! What warrant had he for this? What said the Saviour? "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; but now is my kingdom not of this world." You see, my brethren, the opposition, the direct opposition of the Pope of Rome to Christ and his authority. How palpable! how daring! Look a little longer at the matter. The Pope wears a crown. Did Christ wear a crown? Ah! me, he did wear a crown, but it was a crown of thorns. The Pope wears a crown, set with jewels; Christ, a crown interwoven with thorns. Is the servant greater than his master? or he that is sent

greater than he who sent him? But it is said the Pope is the successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles. Did Paul acknowledge him as prince, when he rebuked him at Antioch? Did James, when he presided himself at the council held in Jerusalem? Did the council, when they sent him upon an errand into gentile lands? or did Peter himself, when he used this unassuming language, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder." The fact is, if any of the apostles was prince, or primate, it must have been Paul, for it was he, and not Peter, who affirmed that "the care of all the churches was upon him." The case is clear; the Church of Rome is the antichristian power spoken of by Daniel, and by John also, which was to rule with a high hand, and continue twelve hundred and sixty years. But whether the rising of this antichristian power be dated from the year 606, or one hundred and fifty years after, it matters not; the time of the end is near. As for myself, I deem both calculations correct. As there was more than one period from which we date the beginning of the Babylonish captivity, which was to last seventy years, and each was right, (seventy years carrying us to some corresponding decree for the restoration of the Jews,) even so, in this case, twelve hundred and sixty years from the *first* mentioned period will carry us to the first effectual blow given to this antichristian power; twelve hundred and sixty from the second will carry us to the last; for according to the Scriptures, this power is not to be crushed in a day; it will die hard, and its last convulsive agonies must needs be protracted. If, then, twelve hundred and

sixty years from the first date bring us to the period when the great power of the Man of Sin shall be broken, twelve hundred and sixty years from the second date will bring us to the grand predicted consummation, when great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!" and amid Alleluias innumerable, her smoke shall go up for ever and ever! But in any case, one thing is evident, Daniel's vision is closing; for it is to be known by this: In the time of the end "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." What a mighty moving amongst the nations has there been in these latter ages! What a spirit of emigration! How they crowd in upon us from the old world! Every ship comes freighted with human beings. The tide of population flowing in upon us from all quarters of the earth is immense—something like three hundred thousand every year. And how many, in our own land, are going east, west, north, and south, as business, or trade, or fancy may direct. I am bold to say, that at this present time there is more of this running to and fro than was ever known before. Yes, literally "running." What is now the usual mode of travelling? Is it not in steamboats and railroad cars? And do we not speak of one "running" ten, twelve, and fourteen miles an hour? and the other "running" twenty, thirty, forty, and even fifty miles an hour? What multitudes are upon the move now, and with what speed do they go! Surely the prophet's mental ray was purged, and it was when he was under the inspiration of the Almighty, that he uttered this prediction—"Many shall



run to and fro;" but this is not all; he adds, "knowledge shall be increased."

And is there not at this time a spirit of inquiry, and a spirit of inquiry such as was never known before? Is not the schoolmaster abroad, and the lecturer abroad, and the missionary abroad? It was said, "The Lord gave the command, and great was the company that published it." And so, at the present time, the Lord has willed it that knowledge shall be increased; and how many, and varied in their characters, are those who are carrying the lights of science and religion into every land! Old landmarks are breaking down; old prejudices are passing away; and sacrifices are now being kindled in every valley, and on every mountain-top, not only throughout our boundless continent, but even in the islands which are afar off. This new order of things may be dated from the period of the Reformation. Then was the long slumber of ages broken; then was the morning-star seen to rise in splendor; and then could the great Reformers exclaim with the voice of joy and praise, "the night is far spent; the day is at hand!" Yea, congratulating each other, they might well indulge in the language of triumph and exultation, and say,

"Christian, see the orient morning  
Breaks along the darken'd sky!  
Lo! the expected day is dawning,  
Glorious Day-Spring from on high.  
Zion's Sun, salvation beaming,  
Gilding now the radiant hills,  
Rise and shine, till, brighter beaming,  
All the world thy glory fills!"

What inventions, what discoveries, what improvements have marked these latter ages! First, we may mention the mariner's compass, by which new oceans have been traversed, and new continents, and islands, and people, and plants have been discovered; and thus enlarging the bounds of human knowledge. And then comes the telescope, spreading out before the mind the immensity of the empire of God, such as was never dreamed of before. In former times it was supposed that there were no more than a thousand stars, (for this is about the number seen by the naked eye,) but now we are told that eighty millions have been brought within the range of human vision, by this powerful, this wonderful instrument, invented by the ingenuity of man. Next comes the microscope, which adds greatly to our knowledge, bringing to view a new universe. This language may seem strange, but it is literally true. Yes, bringing to view a new universe of minute existences, so exceedingly minute, that it requires no less than ten thousand of them to occupy the space of a grain of sand! And then comes the printing-press, that noble invention, which has served to cheapen knowledge, and diffuse it far and wide. Time was when a Bible would cost five hundred dollars; now it can be purchased for less than fifty cents! Time was when it was the work of years; now it can be done in less than an hour! The American Bible Society alone strikes off twenty thousand copies of the sacred Scriptures in a single day! And the whole Testament can be printed in less than one minute! This invention of printing has marked a new epoch in the history of the

world, and has served to spread light and increase knowledge far, very far beyond anything that our progenitors ever dreamed of. What an immense number of new books are continually coming from the press! And as for newspapers, periodicals, and tracts of every kind, they are now being scattered over the wide world like the leaves of autumn, when the trees of the forest are swept by the mighty winds of heaven. Even children now are supplied abundantly with reading matter, rich and varied. Even so late as when I was a child, the grand total of a library for those in tender years amounted to (so far as known to me) not more than some six or eight little books; now many Sabbath-schools have at least one thousand volumes each. One of the prophets, referring to the increasing of knowledge in the latter days, says, "a child shall die a hundred years old." Now we can understand what must have appeared very strange to those in former times; it is now literally true, that one dying in childhood, in this day of increasing light, may know more than many a one who died, in former times, bowed down under the weight of a hundred years.

The steam-power, too—what miracles has that wrought! What a new impulse has it given to printing, travelling, manufactures, and improvements of every kind! Now we are in possession of the secret of performing by one hand what required a hundred in days gone by. Moreover, we have now the blind man's book. Did our fathers ever hear of such a thing as teaching the blind to read? Our Saviour enabled the blind to see by miraculously opening their eyes; but now, without a miracle, they are

taught, not to see, but to read. And is not this the increasing of knowledge in a new quarter? And besides the blind man's book, have we not the diving-bell, an invention of these latter ages, by which a man can go down into the deep, and bring up treasures long buried there. And have we not the submarine telescope, by which a seaman standing upon the deck of a vessel in the midst of the ocean, can look down into the blue water, and see distinctly the bottom of that vessel, even the head of every nail and every crack:—and the submarine battery, by which a man on shore, and hidden from view, can in a moment of time blow up a ship of war, and even a whole fleet, forty miles distant, by an unseen hand. You have witnessed the wonders of the daguerreotype. Time was, when, if you wished your own likeness taken or that of a friend, there must be at least three sittings: two hours the first day, two hours the second, and one the third. Now, one sitting may suffice, and that for less than one minute! Had a person predicted this thirty years ago, he would have been esteemed a visionary and a madman. Moreover, by the inventive power of man, our streets can now be lighted without oil, and our houses without candles. Did our fathers know how this could be done? Ice is now made a staple, and straw converted into paper. Who ever heard of such a thing fifty years ago? In medical science, and mental science, and geological science, how many new facts have been established, and how many wonderful discoveries have been made! But, not to enlarge, there is that “wonder of all wonders”—that great wonder of the age—the magnetic telegraph!



Who ever heard of mortal man's annihilating time and space? And yet here is an invention which, to all intents and purposes, does it; for, in the conveyance of a message, there is no perceptible difference between one mile and ten thousand. A person in New York may converse with his friend in St. Louis with the same ease and in the same time that he could converse with his friend, in writing, in the same room. Nay, matters can be so arranged, that a person in St. Louis, some twelve or fifteen hundred miles distant, may be reading the message of the President at half after eleven o'clock, that very message which is not to be read in Washington City until the clock there strikes twelve. This seems not only like annihilating space, but outstripping time itself. Only think: mortal man, so to speak, grasping the lightnings of heaven, which play around the throne of the Eternal God, and converting them into swift messengers to go and come at his command, saying: "Haste, my servant, carry this message to my friend beyond broad rivers and towering mountains;—fly, swifter than the wind! In less than a moment, bear my message—in less than a moment, bring his answer back!" How astonishing is this! How it spreads knowledge; and how it proves its mighty increase! When I think upon the wonderful inventions, discoveries, developements, and improvements of these latter times, I am amazed. It would seem, that we are coming too near the throne of the Eternal; that we have actually intruded ourselves into his presence-chamber, and are within the precincts of the place where archangels dwell. Is not the inventive

power of man, of the present age, like the pride of Nimrod, who, in the loftiness of his aspirations, said, "Come, let us make a tower, whose top shall reach unto heaven." At any rate, I have thought that if the mind of man, now so luminous, should explode, it would be in a shower of sparks, astonishing the world with the brilliancy of its corruscations. The prophet, some twenty-five hundred years ago, referring, as we verily believe, to the very age in which we live, uttered the prophecy, "Many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased." How clear must have been the visions of him who could predict such things! - Everything was as if then passing directly and in full view before his eyes. Surely the most skeptical must now bow before the power of divine truth. Surely the most obstinate must admit that "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

And now, if these prophecies are true, must not all others recorded in the same sacred volume bear the same sacred character? Permit me simply to remind you of a few:—"Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with them; wo to the wicked, it shall be ill with him." "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." "The hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation." Let then the righteous rejoice, for heaven, with all its joys, is just at hand!

Let the sinner tremble, for hell, with all its sorrows, is not far off! Another moment, and the Christian may be in paradise with God and his angels! Another moment, and the Christless soul may be in tophet, with devils and damned spirits! Awake, one! awake, all! for eternity is nigh, even at the door, and the night cometh, when no man can work! Let no one trifle with matters of such high import! The Bible is true, and all its declarations may assuredly be depended upon. The argument for the inspiration of the sacred volume drawn from prophecy, is only one amongst many, but is of itself convincing; and the man who is an unbeliever, in view of the evidence drawn from this source, would not believe though one rose from the dead. Permit me, also, to guard you against infidelity. As this is a day of abounding iniquity; as intemperance, profane swearing, Sabbath-breaking, gambling, and other kindred vices, are, alas! too common in our midst, we may expect infidelity, at least in some of its forms, to keep pace with these things; for, as one well remarks, "Infidelity is a disease of the heart, not of the head." Let the morals be corrupt, and the sentiments will soon become loose. Let the heart be infected with vice, and infidelity will forthwith spring up, like green scum upon the surface of a foul and stagnant pool. Beware of infidelity! It wars against reason and common sense, against God and the best interests of man. Beware of infidelity! It teaches that man is not responsible to his Maker for his actions, however atrocious they may be, and that in the end it will be as well with the gambler and the pirate as with

the man of virtue and religion. Beware of infidelity! It curses the body, and curses the soul; it curses you in time, and it will curse you through all eternity. Beware of infidelity! It will poison the stream of public morals, and public happiness: it will rob you of your dearest hopes and sweetest comforts; it will rob you of the favor of God; will hang around your dying bed the curtains of gloom and despair. It will lay your body in an unblest grave, and your soul "in the urn of everlasting death!" I have heard the saying, "cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war;" but he who encourages infidelity, in a more fearful sense cries "havoc!" and lets slip, not the dogs of war, but the spirits of Pandemonium, and the demons of the pit! Young man, listen to me: I repeat once more what I have said before—your Christian mother is right—the Bible is true! and if you die without the repentance which it enjoins, and the Saviour which it reveals; mark my word, in the great day of judgment you will wish you had never been born!

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### SERMON III.

NATURE, SINFULNESS, AND CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF.

He that believeth not shall be damned.—MARK XVI. 16.

THIS is one of the most awful declarations found in all the sacred volume: and it assumes a character of peculiar interest and solemnity, when we recollect, 1. By whom this declaration was originally made; and, 2. The circumstances in which it was made.



By whom was this declaration originally made? It was not by an enemy, but by a Friend—the sinner's best Friend—even the loving tender-hearted Saviour himself. Yes, it is none other than the blessed Jesus, who died for sinners, and before whose judgment-seat we must all one day appear, who said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." And when did he utter this awful language? In the most interesting circumstances which can well be imagined. It was in his last interview with his disciples. He had died on the cross; he had risen from the tomb, and he was now just about to ascend to heaven. His disciples are around him, and there is the cloud, like a chariot, hovering over him, and angels waiting to attend him to his home in the sky. In these peculiarly interesting circumstances, our great Redeemer gave his parting charge:—"Go my disciples, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved"—here we have the overtures of mercy for those who accept of the way of salvation proposed in the gospel—"but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Here we have solemnly announced the certain doom of those who reject it. Remember, these are among the very last words which fell from the lips of our blessed Saviour, when on earth, and they may well be depended upon, for who can suppose that He, whose love for our race was stronger than death, would use language unnecessarily harsh? or who can for a moment suppose that our Saviour would utter vain words, especially in circumstances of such peculiar interest and solemnity? No, my friends, the declaration

in our text may not be lightly regarded: it presents a truth of tremendous import, and must stand forever—"he that believeth not, shall be damned."

The nature, the sinfulness, and the consequence of unbelief, will now engage our attention.

And, First. The *nature* of unbelief. And here we need not enlarge. Unbelief is the opposite of faith. Now, as faith is giving credence to the testimony of God in general, having special reference to the mediatorial character of Christ, as the world's last and only hope, unbelief is the rejection of that testimony. And this may be either speculative or practical—speculative, as when a man looks upon Christianity as a farce, and the Bible as a cunningly devised fable. Unbelievers of this class are certainly embraced in the anathema of the text, "he that believeth not, shall be damned." But unbelief may also be practical, as when a person professes to believe that the Bible is the word of God, and yet is not influenced by the Bible; or, as when a man admits that Christ is a Saviour, and yet receives him not as such; admits that Christ is the only Saviour, and yet treats him as if he were no Saviour at all. In this case, the understanding assents, but the will rebels; the head is right, but the heart is wrong. There is no want of evidence, but a lack of disposition. In both cases the unbelief is substantially the same. Christ is rejected; and as without him there is no Saviour, the condemnation of the one, of course, must be as certain as the condemnation of the other. So, then, the anathema of the text is of great compass, and may have reference to some—alas! I fear, to many at

this very time. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Second. The *sinfulness* of unbelief. It is manifest, from the whole tenor of the Bible, that whether we can fully understand the matter or not, there is something in the sight of God exceedingly offensive and hateful in the sin of unbelief. No sin, it would appear, calls down heavier wrath than this. Why was it that a whole generation of Jews were cut off from the promised land? The Psalmist says, that with that generation God was not well pleased, and sware, in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest; and, lo! their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and their bones were made to bleach in the desert, a fearful monument of God's wrath for some sin committed! And what sin? Their strivings, their rebellions, their idolatries? No. Why, then, was it that they were not permitted to enter the promised land? The apostle tells us, in express terms: "They could not enter in, because of unbelief." And when he said this, he seized the opportunity to give needful warning to those to whom he was writing. "Take heed, brethren," says he, "lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief;" and again, "let us labor to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Some eighteen hundred years ago, the Jews were cut off from their land, amid circumstances which indicated special divine wrath. Our Saviour predicted that there would be many signs and wonders and fearful sights connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, such as should cause men's hearts to tremble and fail within them. And the

account which Josephus gives is most remarkable and full of terror. He tells us that a meteor, having the appearance of a broad-sword, was seen suspended over Jerusalem, I think, for the space of three years; that voices were heard in the clouds, as of horses and chariots rushing to battle; that the priests who ministered in the holy place, overheard voices in the holy of holies, (where, mark! none but the high-priest was permitted to enter, and he only once a year,) saying, "Let us go hence! let us go hence!" And one thing, which occasioned a greater panic than anything else, was this:—A person came from the country, presenting a singular appearance, and uttering strange sounds. "A voice!" cried he, "a voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds! Wo to Jerusalem! wo to the temple!" By order of the magistrates, he was arrested; he was scourged. Josephus affirms that his very bones were laid bare; but he ceased not uttering the same mysterious cry—"A voice from the east! a voice from the west! a voice from the four winds! Wo to Jerusalem! wo to the temple! wo to myself!" And as he uttered these last words—wo to myself!—a stone from the besieging army struck him, and he fell dead! Moreover, the historian tells us, that when Titus, the Roman commander, had gotten within the walls of the city, and had looked upon the scene of unprecedented distress spread before his eyes he could not refrain from tears; and, looking up to heaven, he called God to witness that he (Titus) had not brought these calamities upon the Jews; and added, that it was so evident that God was angry with them, that he



was afraid not to punish them, lest God should punish him. And whereas, on former occasions, they were driven away from their land and sent into captivity, in some cases for seven, and twelve, and twenty, and even seventy years, now they have been cut off, for, lo ! these eighteen hundred years. Now, the question is, why were they thus cut off ? The answer is given by the apostle himself : " Because of unbelief they were broken off." Again, as on a former occasion, the apostle seizes the opportunity to make an improvement of the matter : " Thou standest by faith," says he ; " be not high-minded, but fear." There is a passage in our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus that is very remarkable, and much to the point : " He that believeth on him, (that is, on Christ,) is not condemned, but he that believeth not, is condemned already." And why ? Mark the reason given : Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Just as if the sin of unbelief were the only sin which condemns the sinner. And in our Saviour's last consolatory address to his disciples, we find another passage equally remarkable, and, if possible, stronger, and yet more to the point : " And when he (the Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment." Mark ! of sin, because they believe not in me ! Here it would appear that the grand design of the mission of the Spirit into our world was to produce a conviction of sin. And what sin. Of unbelief.—" Of sin, because they believe not on me."

Is this the only sin which men commit ? or are other sins not heinous in the sight of God ? This is not the

idea intended here to be conveyed. There are many other sins which men commit, and the Bible stamps them as sins very odious and offensive in the sight of God, but unbelief is the greatest of all: it is that which embraces all others, and, so to speak, swallows them up. Here is the shadow of a cloud passing over the earth. It is distinctly seen; but the shades of night come, and that shadow is lost, being swallowed up in the deeper gloom of the midnight hour. Even so, lying, and fraud, and drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking, and profane swearing, and all other sins which men commit, heinous as they are, yield to the more heinous and more soul-destroying sin of unbelief. This is emphatically *the sin*, the *crying sin*, the *damning sin*! Those of you who respect the Bible are ready to say, It really does appear, from the Scriptures, that it is even so;—but, you may be ready to add, “But, sir, I must confess, after all, I cannot see wherein consists this exceeding sinfulness of unbelief. I do not know what makes it so peculiarly odious and offensive in the sight of God.” Now this is the very point before us—the sinfulness of unbelief. If I mistake not, it chiefly consists in this, that it strikes a blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; would strip the ever blessed God of all of his perfections, and would lay his honor and his throne in the dust.\*

I. Unbelief strikes a blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *wisdom*. The wisdom of God appears in the garniture of the heavens, in the structure of our bodies, in changing

\* Vide Charnock on the Divine Attributes.

seasons, in the alternations of day and night, in ten thousand things ; but when the wisdom of God is spoken of, these things are not once alluded to. The plan of redemption—it is that which looms up. It is that which seems to fill the whole range of vision, human and divine. Before it, all other objects seem to vanish away, as twinkling stars before the rising sun. This is called “the wisdom of God ;” “the wisdom of God in a mystery,” and “the manifold wisdom of God.” Into this, it is said, the “angels of God desire to look.” They are represented as stooping down from their lofty seats in glory, and endeavoring, with holy wonder and delight, to search out this chief display of the wisdom of God ; and when Paul refers to it, he breaks out in this language : “O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !” And well might he say, “O the depth !” for no line of human or angelic intellect can fathom it. For, to save the sinner, and yet maintain the honors of the divine government, it is requisite, not to harmonize jarring elements in the world of nature, but, to harmonize conflicting attributes in the bosom of the God of nature. Mercy pleads for pardon—Justice demands punishment. “Spare the sinner !” cries Mercy. “Cut him down,” says Justice, “why cumbereth he the ground ?” “O forgive ! forgive !” Mercy weepingly implores—stern Justice frowns, and thunders out, “Satisfaction or death !” Now if Mercy prevails, Justice is humbled ; if Justice triumphs, the sinner is lost for ever. But in the cross of Christ all the perfections of God are made

to triumph, as if they were one attribute—triumph gloriously! An infinite sacrifice satisfies Divine justice, and the infinitely rich fruits of that sacrifice satisfies Divine mercy. This is the thing into which angels desire to look. This is the thing which causes Paul to exclaim, “O the depth!” It is this which shall wake up the sweetest and the loudest pæans in the world of glory. It is this which through the mighty roll of everlasting ages shall fill the great temple of God Almighty with sounding praise! Now this plan, by which God can be just, and yet justify the ungodly who believe in the Son of his love—the plan by which is presented to us in the Scriptures as the “chief display of the wisdom of God,” all glorious and divine—unbelief rejects—treats it as though it were unworthy of any regard. Its language is this: “Paul admires it; angels desire to look into it; and God himself glories in it, as his master-piece of wisdom—but it is all foolishness! I see nothing in it to excite any admiration—it deserves no regard!” Ah! thus unbelief pours contempt upon the wisdom of God! And is not this a sin, a crying sin, a damning sin? “He that believeth not, shall be damned.”

II. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *love*. God has given innumerable proofs of his kind regard for our race, but our blessed Saviour points out one, as greater than all others put together. “God,” said he, “so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” God might have made a brighter light than that which creates our day; he



might have made loftier angels, and a greater universe than he has made ; but (I speak it with reverence) I see not how an infinite God could have made a greater gift than the gift of his Son—his only begotten and well beloved Son ! Here, you perceive, is a draft, not upon the resources of nature, but upon the bosom of the God of nature. O what love was this, that God should so love our lost and ruined world as to give—not treasures of silver and gold—not worlds, nor angels—but his Son, his only begotten and well beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life ! What is the language of John in relation to this matter ? “ Herein is love,” says he, “ not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” Note the phrase, “ herein is love :” as if he had said, Are you looking out for some commanding proof of love ? Look at the cross of Christ ! Look at the plan of redemption ! Here it is ! This is love, indeed ! “ Love divine, all love excelling.” And again, the same apostle says, in the language of perfect admiration : “ Behold ! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us !” As if he had said, Ye angels, behold ! Ye winged messengers that compass creation, behold ! and do thou, O man, behold ! and say, was there ever love like this ! But this love, this wondrous, matchless love, unbelief slights ; looks upon it with cold indifference ; turns away from it with contempt, as if it were not worthy of a single thought ; as if it were not worthy of the slightest regard. And call you this no sin ? What ! to treat with contempt the chief display of the

goodness of God! to reject his gift, his dearest and most valued gift! Is this nothing? I knew once a little orphan boy, a motherless child; an elder sister, whom he loved, was displeased with him. The poor little orphan boy was much distressed, and could not be happy without being restored to his sister's love. Gathering all the little money which he had been accumulating for a long time, amounting to about fifty cents, he laid it all out for a little matter which he thought would please his sister, and sent it to her as a kind of peace-offering, or token of his desire to be on good terms with her. This gift was rejected. It was sent back, and contemptuously dashed upon the floor at his feet. It almost broke his heart. This little orphan boy had laid out all his little store in a present, sent to propitiate his sister, whom he loved, and his present was rejected. I repeat it, it almost broke his heart. I was that little orphan boy. I know what it is to have a present rejected; to have my love despised. In some respects, this case is in point. God loved the sinner, and sent his Son—gave his Son to die for him. Yes, Christ was the gift of God—so to speak. Christ was God's present to our race. But this gift, this present, is rejected. This expression of God's love is despised. Is not this a sin? Is it not a crying sin? Is it not a damning sin? "He that believeth not shall be damned."

III. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *sovereignty*. As Creator and King, God has an unquestionable right to legislate for the creatures which he has made. He has legislated for man. In the matter

of salvation, God, in his wisdom and love, has devised and revealed a plan whereby he will bestow forgiveness and salvation upon those who accept of the Saviour whom he has provided. And he has positively declared that this is the way of salvation, and that there is no other. Now, unbelief leads the sinner to reject this way, and seek salvation, in some other—by his own works of righteousness. It may be, by his prayers, his deeds of charity; it may be by a moral life, or by penances, or pilgrimages, or the absolution of priests, or the intercession of saints. This is all disobedience. It is high-handed rebellion. It speaks this language: God may legislate for the angels, but he shall not legislate for me. He may fix the way of salvation for other men, but he shall not be allowed to fix it for me. I will not regard the will of God—I shall not submit to his authority. His sceptre shall not be extended over me. I will have nothing to do with the Saviour of his providing—I choose to be saved in my own way. And is not this striking a blow at the standard of the King of heaven and earth? And is this nothing? Is not this a sin, a crying sin, a damning sin? “He that believeth not, shall be damned?” O God of mercy, make the sinner to know his transgression and his sin!

IV. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *truth*. John says, he that believeth the record of God concerning his Son, has set to his seal that God is true; but he that believeth not, hath made him a liar! What strong language is this, and in what an awful,

frightful light, does it present the sin of unbelief! I have seen men excited; I have heard them using towards each other harsh language—abusive language—and yet no act of violence was done; but the moment one said to the other, “You are a liar”—that moment the blow was given. This is common, all the world over. I do not say it is right, but I do say, it requires grace, much grace, not to give the blow. And why? In pronouncing a man a liar, you give him the greatest affront which can be given. You pronounce him vile, depraved, void of all moral principle, fit only to be scorned and despised. Now, sinner! O thou who hast rejected Heaven’s Darling, remember the words of the apostle, and let conviction seize upon you! Yea, let fear come upon you, and trembling, which shall make all your bones to shake. By your unbelief you have dishonoured God! You have insulted your Maker! You have made the Ancient of days, the all-glorious, and ever blessed King of the universe a liar! Be sure your sin will find you out. You and God must meet. And if you have committed no other sin on earth, in rejecting Christ, remember, you have one sin resting upon your soul, which, if unrepented of, will press upon you as a mountain—will for ever sink you down. But this is not all. There is another aspect in which we may view the sin of unbelief, and one in which, if possible, it appears in yet darker colors, and more sinful still.

V. Unbelief strikes a blow at God, the Son, pouring contempt upon his *mediatorial character*. Glorious and divine as God the Father is, there is a new loveliness and



sweetness thrown around the second Person of the Trinity, as God, man, mediator; possessing in himself both the divine and human nature, he presents all the glories of a God, attempered with the milder beauties of a perfect man. Besides, he comes to us as an angel of mercy, a legate from the skies. He comes to accomplish a work of love and reconciliation; to put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. This invests his character with a new charm. This should make him unspeakably dear to every heart. Every individual, so to speak, should go out to meet him with joy; everyone should cordially receive him in the arms of a sweet appropriating faith. But unbelief treats him as if he had no beauty or excellence of character; as if he were no mediator at all. Faith says, This is the rose of Sharon; this is the one altogether lovely! Unbelief says, No; he is a root out of dry ground; he has no form or comeliness; nothing for which we should desire him! And thus unbelief makes light of the great Redeemer, and pours contempt upon all the sweetness and loveliness of his mediatorial character. Martyrs of Jesus! what think ye of this? Angels of God! is this no sin?

VI. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Son, pouring contempt upon his *mediatorial sufferings*. A good man in distress presents a scene which affects the heart; and if this distress should be on account of another, especially if it should be for our sake, how it would touch our hearts—how it would wake up the strongest and the tenderest feelings in our bosom! But more than a good man is here. It is God's eternal Son.

And O! see him in the garden! He is in distress; his soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death! He prays; and what says he? "O! my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; but not as I will, but as thou wilt!" He prays again with equal anguish. "And again, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down upon the ground!" And for whom is all this suffering and agony? Not for himself; not for fallen angels; but for sinners of Adam's race. "*For thee, my soul, for thee!*" Is not this enough to subdue the most obdurate soul? The believer is conquered. Faith, with strong emotion, gazes upon her Redeemer, amid the sorrowful scenes of the garden. She follows him to the cross; sees him nailed to the accursed tree; she sees his precious blood gushing forth, streaming down, and smoking upon the mount; she sees him insulted and reviled, even upon the cross; she witnesses his dying agonies; she hears his last prayer, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!" Claspings the cross, crimsoned with the blood of her incarnate God, she exclaims:—Here is the last hope of a dying world! Here is *my* hope—*my only hope!*

"My Lord, my Life, my Sacrifice,  
My Jesus, and my All!"

But unbelief weeps not, feels not, cares not; looks on with cold indifference, is touched neither by the sorrows of the garden, nor the agonies of the cross; looks upon the whole as a picture or a farce; and, at the very foot of the cross, can freely indulge in that sin which made the

Saviour bleed and die. O! unbelief! unbelief! Thou makest light of that which might make angels weep! Thou makest light of that which caused the sun to withhold its light; which rent the vail of the temple; which burst the rocks, and shook the earth, and heaved out the dead! Thou hast slighted, thou hast rejected him who died for thee! And is this no sin? One of Pennsylvania's favourite sons, some years ago, heard me preach Christ, and him crucified. I noticed that his eyes were fixed upon me, and his feelings were stirred within him. Upon the conclusion of the service, I called at his office. (He was a lawyer.) I found him in great distress. I asked him what was the matter. "O, sir!" replied he, with strong emotion, "I feel that I am one of the greatest sinners that ever breathed the breath of life!" What is the sin which troubles you most? "Sir," said he, "I have rejected the Saviour thirty years. I do not see how it is possible for me to be forgiven!" And well may this remind us of the words of our Saviour: "When the Spirit is come, he will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me!" Ah! my brethren, the rejection of a dying Saviour!—this is emphatically the sin, the crying sin, the damning sin! "He that believeth not, shall be damned." But, to crown the matter, once more.

VII. Unbelief *would rob the Saviour of his mediatorial reward!* "For the joy that was set before him," says the apostle, "he endured the cross, despising the shame," What joy was this? The joy of leading many sons and daughters to glory. The joy of snatching millions, unnumbered millions, from hell, and landing them in

heaven. The joy of seeing them made happy by his sufferings; happy for ever and for evermore! For this joy, which was set before him, which was promised in the counsels of eternity—for this joy, he endured the cross, despising the shame. This is a beautiful and tender thought. It would seem that this idea was immediately and constantly before the mind of the Saviour, amid all the sufferings of the cross, and the ignominy thereof—that he was not suffering in vain; that it was for the accomplishment of a great and good object; for the salvation of a ruined world. Now, unbelief says, This object shall not be attained. This joy he shall not have. He shall return to the skies as one defeated, without one trophy—without one of Adam's race to sing his praise. God, the Father, had said, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death! and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." But if unbelief prevails, this reward will not be his. He will not "divide a portion with the great," nor "the spoils with the strong." In vain will he have borne the sin of many, in vain will he have made intercession for the transgressors. All that he has done and suffered for the redemption of man will be in vain. Having undertaken to carry out the scheme of redemption, he will have failed. Having entered the conflict with the powers of darkness, they will have triumphed. The Son of God will have been defeated—the great plan of redemption will have proved a failure. The tide of



salvation must roll back; the whole human family must go down to the pit, and the curtain of despair must hang around them forever! Yes, my brethren, this is the direct tendency of unbelief; the natural workings of this great evil—this damning sin. No wonder, then, that these were amongst the last words which fell from the lips of the ascending Saviour—"He that believeth not, shall be damned."

Having pointed out, as clearly as we could, the nature and the sinfulness of unbelief, we are now to show,

VIII. The *consequence* of unbelief. On such a subject we would not speak flippantly; We would speak with great solemnity; for it is one of tremendous import. We can do no better than earnestly to request and entreat you to muse upon the language of our text; the words, the last parting words of our blessed and ascending Saviour—"He that believeth not, shall be damned." And what is it to be damned? It is to have all the sins you have ever committed fastened upon your poor soul forever. It is to have no part in the first resurrection, but to be imprisoned in the tomb until the second blast of the trump, louder than a thousand thunders, and more awful than the hoarse crash of falling worlds, shall call you up to the resurrection of the lost! What is it to be damned? It is to be placed upon the left hand of the Judge in the great day of accounts. It is to be grouped with murderers of fathers, and murderers of mothers, with thieves, with robbers, with pirates, with liars, with drunkards, with all the mean and all the vile, and all the abominable gathered from earth and hell, and with them

to hear the dreadful sound, "Depart!" What is it to be damned? It is to go away into everlasting punishment, into the blackness of darkness, into the pit that has no bottom, and into the fire that is never to be quenched! What is it to be damned? It is to be cut off from God and all his angels, from the ransomed and all our pious friends—from heaven and all its joys. It is to be deprived of all peace and all comfort; of all hope and all expectation. It is to be given over to all the thralldom of sin, to all the thrillings of remorse, to all the agonies of despair. It is to be ruined and undone. Lost! lost! lost forever! O! who can bear the thought of being damned forever? Shall any lift up their eyes in torment? Shall any have, in the world of woe, to send up the sad and mournful lamentation—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved?" Heaven forbid! But are there not here some impenitent, unbelieving sinners? They are the very ones who are exposed to the anathema of the text. O! careless mariner upon the sea of life, breakers are ahead! O! thoughtless traveller to great eternity, a fearful pit is before you! Danger is nigh, even at the door; and do you ask, What is to be done? Would to God that this cry was coming up from all parts of this congregation! It is the pentecostal cry. It is the cry of the three thousand who were convicted and converted on the day of Pentecost. And was not this, too, the anxious inquiry of the Philippian jailor: "O sirs, what must I do to be saved?" It has been put, by many in every age, and has resulted in peace and joy. Is any disposed to propound this question? God be gracious

to all such ! There is hope for all !—aye, and even in the very verse whence our text is taken ; for, if we find it there written, “ He that believeth not, shall be damned,” we find it there also written, “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” Thank God you need not perish. O listen to the sweet words of the Saviour again : “ He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.” How cheering ! how charming is the voice ; how sweet the tidings are !

There is another thing which is most encouraging to the sin-sick soul, and that also is in close connection with our text. In our Saviour’s last charge, which contains our text, he gave commandment to his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke xxiv. 47. Only think—Jerusalem ! The very place where his murderers dwelt ; the very place where they crowned him with thorns ; where they smote him upon the cheek, where they spit in his face, where they nailed him to the cross, and where they gave him vinegar and gall to drink in the hour of his deepest agony ! and where, after his death, as he foresaw, the unfeeling soldier thrust his spear into his side ! As if he had said, “ Go, my disciples, and preach that gospel which breathes good will toward all mankind, which opens the gates of paradise to a dying world—preach that gospel first to my enemies ! Go, tell those priests and pharisees, those scribes and elders, who longed for the time to come when they should feast their eyes with my streaming veins, and regale their ears with my dying groans—go, tell them that they never so

thirsted for my blood as I have desired their salvation. Go, find out those soldiers who plaited a crown of thorns and put it upon my head—tell them that I, by my streaming blood, have bought for them crowns of glory, and no rugged thorns shall be found in those crowns of glory! Go, my disciples, and tell that man who spit in my face, how freely Jesus can forgive! Go, my disciples, and find out those who nailed me to the cross, and tell them that I am now willing to put under them my pierced hands, and raise them to thrones in the highest heavens, and no nails shall be driven into their hands! Go, my disciples, and search for that man who gave me vinegar and gall to drink in the hour of my deepest agony, and tell him that I freely offer him the cup of salvation, and no drop of vinegar or gall shall be found in that cup! Go, my disciples, and find out that soldier who thrust his spear into my side, and tell him that there is a nearer way to my heart. Blessed Jesus! who can resist thy matchless grace, thy dying love! It is enough! We see that thou art able and willing to save the chief of sinners, even the vilest of the vile! O! that every sinner would respond, “It is enough! blessed Redeemer! glorious Saviour! I will reject thee no more! ‘I yield, I yield; I can hold out no longer—By dying love compelled, I own thee conqueror!’ I repent in dust and ashes! I take thee now on *thy* terms, on *any* terms. ‘Here, Lord, I give myself away, ’tis all that I can do!’”



## SERMON IV.

## JUSTIFICATION.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God —ROM. v. 1, 2.

NO TRUTH is more certain than this, that we are sinners; yea, that all have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God, for the apostle John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But another truth, equally certain is this that the great God with whom we have to do, is pure and holy—cannot look upon sin with allowance, and has positively declared that he will, by no means, clear the guilty. These things being so a question here presents itself, Who can be just with God?

This is a question of immense importance to our race, and one which, without divine illumination, I verily believe neither man nor angel can solve. This very subject the apostle handles in the preceding context. After affirming that God hath concluded all under sin, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God, and that, consequently, by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in his sight—after showing that man, by reason of sin, was in himself absolutely ruined and undone, he proceeds to speak of the plan of justification proposed in the gospel, and winds up with these emphatic words: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Having met an objection or two, which he saw would be urged against the doctrine, he then, in beautiful language, lays before us some of the rich blessings which accompany or flow from a state of justification with God. We purpose now to present :

I. The great doctrine of Justification ; and

II. Some of the blessings connected with it.

I. *The great doctrine of Justification.*—We hesitate not to pronounce it a great doctrine. In the whole range of theology there is none of more vital importance than this, for it is nothing less than the mode of the sinner's acceptance with God, and a mistake here may be fatal. It becomes us, then, diligently to attend to this matter, particularly as error on the subject is abroad, and these are backed by some of the strongest feelings of human nature. It is no uncommon thing to hear a remark of this kind : "I know that I am a sinner ; I know that I have done some evil deeds, but I have also done some things, many things, that are good, and God is merciful." The idea is this : the sinner purposes to balance his good and evil deeds, and hopes that the good will preponderate, and upon this he bases his hopes of heaven : or, if he has any misgivings on the subject, and fears that his good deeds may not outweigh his evil, he trusts that the breath of mercy will turn the scale in his favor, adding as much of the righteousness of Christ as may be sufficient to make up what is wanting in his own. Believe me, this is not Heaven's plan. No such idea falls in with the great doctrine of grace taught in the sacred volume ; and no such patch-robe righteousness will be

seen within all the precincts of the heavenly world. Even in Protestant lands, where the Bible is more commonly read, error abounds. The natural pride of man leads him astray. That self-righteous spirit, so deeply seated in the human bosom, causes many to embrace notions on the subject which are not scriptural, which are not true. And with regard to papal lands, the whole system taught in relation to auricular confession, penance, the merits of saints, purgatory, and the like, is directly calculated to mislead souls, and cause them to embrace fatal error. Indeed, this error is brought to a point. It is made to assume a palpable and authoritative form, as may be seen in the decrees of the Council of Trent, which, of course, are binding upon the whole Roman Catholic world. The decree of the article of Justification is in substance this: Whoever shall affirm that a man is justified by faith alone, let him be accursed. Martin Luther, being still alive, and remembering the words of the apostle Paul, "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law," and also this language, "not of works, lest any man should boast," Martin Luther, I say, filled with holy indignation, grasped his pen, and besides other language, wrote these words in a very solemn protest, "I, Martin Luther, an unworthy preacher of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus profess and thus believe, that this article, that *faith alone*, without works, can justify before God, shall never be overthrown, neither by the Emperor, nor by the Turk, nor by the Tartar, nor by the Pope, with all his cardinals, bishops, sacrificers, monks, nuns, kings, princes, powers

of the world, nor yet by all devils in hell. This is the doctrine I teach. In this I will abide. Amen." And to this, I trust, all are ready to respond Amen, for believe me, in the sight of a holy God all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. and none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. The poet has well said,

"The best obedience of my hands  
Dare not appear before thy throne,  
But faith can answer thy demands,  
By pleading what my Lord hath done."

But let us proceed to the matter in hand. According to the Scriptures the term Justification has a forensic character, and simply means the declaring or pronouncing a person righteous according to law; that is, acquitted, not exposed to the penalty. "If," says Moses, "there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the Judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." And now, as to condemn a person in a court of law on earth, is not to make that person guilty, but simply to pronounce him so in the eyes of the law, even so, in the reverse case, to justify a man is not to make him just, but simply to pronounce him so according to law—not exposed to the penalty.

Justification is either legal or evangelical. If a man could be found on earth who had never sinned, he might be justified in a way strictly legal; for, no law having been violated, no penalty has been incurred; but as according to the Scriptures, all have sinned, so, according to the Scriptures, by the deeds of the law no flesh can be



justified in the sight of God. In these circumstances, if there can be no expedient devised for satisfying the claims of the law and justice of God, the sinner's case is hopeless, his doom is sealed, and he is lost forever ! But now comes the Bible plan of justification, which stamps this volume with infinite value, and gives it pre-eminence over every other—the Bible plan of justification, which is as a beam of light in a dark day, or the sight of a habitation to one bewildered and lost. And what is this plan ? Justification by the righteousness of another—even the Lord Jesus Christ, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities—who, his his own self, bare our sins in his own body upon the tree. How numerous are the passages of Scripture which teach the great doctrine of the atonement, or the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. What is the language of Paul ! “He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” And what is the language of the apostle John ? “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” And what says the Saviour himself ? “I am the good shepherd ; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep.” And again : “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep.” And if you note the song of the redeemed in heaven, you will find that they all, unitedly and with loud voices, ascribe their salvation to him who loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood. This is the name by which he is known to every true member of the Church on earth and in heaven,

*"The Lord our Righteousness."* Yes, it is in and through Christ alone that we can find acceptance with God. We can make no satisfaction to the violated law and justice of God. Christ is our only hope—without him we perish, but united to him we are safe—clothed upon with the robe of righteousness

"God will pronounce the sinner just,  
And take the saint to heaven."

But how are we to get this justifying righteousness? How are we, so to speak, to make it our own—for all legal purposes our own? There is no difficulty. The Bible is very clear upon this subject. Notice the language of our text: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This falls in precisely with what is said in another place: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And again: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The main idea is this: Faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ; it is the hand which lays hold of it, and puts it down to our account. In other words, the Spirit, working faith in us, links us to Christ, in our effectual calling; so that, in the eyes of the law, we are one with him. If he be accounted righteous, we shall be accounted righteous too; and if he be accepted, we, for his sake, shall be accepted also; for, according to the Scriptures, the union between Christ and believers is represented by similitudes peculiarly striking and strong. Is he the vine? Believers are the branches. Is he the

head? Believers are the members. Is he the bridegroom? Believers are the bride. And the apostle, in a certain place, uses language still stronger, when he says, We are the members of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones. How intimate is this union! how indissoluble! Hence the triumphant language of the apostle: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

This naturally leads us to speak of the blessings consequent upon a state of justification with God. But that we may be better prepared to solace ourselves with these things, it will be proper to notice, as the apostle did, some objections which have been made to the doctrine of salvation by faith, without works.

It has been objected—I. That it militates against the doctrine taught by James. And we confess, at first view, the objection appears to have much force; but when examined, we find it has no force at all. What is the language of Paul? "Therefore, we conclude that a man

is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." And what says James? "Ye see, then, brethren, how that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." I admit that there is a discrepancy in the language, a downright contradiction, if you please, and yet the two apostles are harmonious in sentiment. They must be, for they were inspired by one and the same Spirit, and there is no difficulty in reconciling their language. It is no uncommon thing for different persons to use different and very opposite language, and yet mean the very same thing. For example: A and B are speaking about you. A says you are a mortal man, and must soon die. B says you are immortal, and can never die, but must live forever. Do these individuals differ in sentiment in relation to you? Not at all. But in speaking about you, they have not reference to the same thing. When A said, you are a mortal man, and must soon die, he had reference to your body. When B. said you are immortal, and must live forever, he had reference to your soul. Now, although the language is contradictory, yet really there is no diversity of sentiment. They believe the very same thing. So in the case before us. The language of the two apostles is contradictory; but mark, they are not speaking about the same thing. Examine the case and you will find it is even so. Paul is speaking about justification before God, James about justification before man. In Paul's Epistle to the Romans, 3d chapter, 19th and 20th verses, we find these words: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be



stopped, and all the world be found guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Paul, you perceive, speaks of justification in the sight of God. But by reference to James ii. 15, 16, and 17, you will find that this apostle is speaking of a different matter altogether. "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Paul speaks of justification in the sight of God; James of justification in the sight of man. Paul tells us how a person may become a Christian by faith; James tells us how a person may prove himself to be a Christian by works. There is no discrepancy. The objection is annihilated. But it is objected, 2. That this doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the deeds of the law, is a dangerous doctrine. It makes good works of no account. It nullifies the law, sets it aside as a dead letter, and makes it void. It is remarkable that the apostle adverts to this very objection, and shows that it is entirely groundless. "Do we, then, make void the law, through faith? God forbid! We establish the law." And what makes this more remarkable is this: This method of anticipating objections, and putting them down, is very common in the Scriptures. Thus in regard to the doctrine of regeneration, when our

Saviour said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," the objection urged by many is represented as having been made by Nicodemus, "How can these things be?" and put down thus: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Take another case. Some persons deny the doctrine of the supreme divinity of Christ. On what ground? Mystery. Now what says Paul? "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." The apostle admits the mystery, but insists upon it that the doctrine is true, notwithstanding, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. Again, some persons object to the doctrine of election. The apostle was aware that the doctrine would not be liked by some; and therefore, after presenting the doctrine very strongly in these words, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," he himself immediately starts the objection: "Thou wilt then say unto me, Wherefore doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" meets it in this way: "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor?" So also with regard to the doctrine of

the final perseverance of saints. Do any object that the doctrine cannot be true, because they have known some to die in sin who were once converted? See how John meets that objection: "They went out from us, because they were not of us; but they went out, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us. This being the usual way of meeting objections, it is used in the case before us. "Do we, then, make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law."

I might, if it were necessary, prove what the apostle affirms. Just take this view of the matter: The sinner is awakened; he finds that he has broken God's righteous law; his sins come rolling over his soul. They are a burden too heavy for him to bear. He at first seeks relief in his own way; he goes about from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, from resolution to resolution; thus endeavoring to establish his own righteousness, but all in vain. He finds no peace; the burden is upon him still. Now he begins to think his case is a peculiar one; fears that his day of grace is over, and there is no hope for him. When just ready to despair, Christ is presented as a needful, suitable, all-sufficient Saviour. The sinner is enabled, by faith to receive him cordially as he is offered in the gospel. And now his burden is gone; and now, Christ being formed in his heart, the hope of glory, love to the Redeemer becomes the ruling passion of his soul, and

"'Tis love which makes our willing feet

In swift obedience move."

Aye, there is nothing like love to rouse the soul, and stir

it up to all holy and cheerful obedience. Hence the language of the apostle, "The love of Christ constraineth us;" and the language of a certain martyr, "I cannot argue for my Saviour, but I can die for him." "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law."

The great and precious doctrine of justification having been thus explained and vindicated, we proceed to lay before you,

II. Some of the blessings which accompany or flow from a state of justification with God. I. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." O what a blessing this is! Eliphaz certainly thought it of great value; hence his language to Job, "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace with him; thereby good shall come unto thee." Before the sinner embraces the Saviour in the arms of an appropriating faith, there is a controversy between him and his Maker. He is an enemy to God by wicked works—yea, a child of wrath and heir of hell. All the feelings of his unrenewed nature are arrayed against God, and all the perfections of God are arrayed against him. But now, united to Christ by faith, there is a change, both in the sinner's state and condition. The enmity of his heart is slain; the rebellion of his will is subdued. Vanquished by grace divine, he who once rebelled against his Maker now rebels no more, and he who was once the sinner's adversary, is now his adversary no longer. Peace is made. A work of reconciliation is accomplished; and, so to speak, a covenant of amity is ratified on earth and



in heaven. Everything is new and pleasant now. The sinner's state is changed; his character is changed; his views, his feelings, his prospects, all are changed. He enters, as it were, into a new world, and all is peace now. The stormy cloud is gone, and the rainbow of promise spans the heavens. No lurid lightnings flash, no pealing thunders roar. Sinai's terrors are all over and gone. No voice of alarm now; no sentence of condemnation; no fear of wrath any more! This is a great matter. Only think—peace with God, the great God, against whom we have sinned, and before whose judgment-bar we must one day appear! What is like it—to be compared with it! I have seen peace made amongst men. I have seen those who long were at variance reconciled. I have seen them giving to each other the right hand of fellowship, in token of cordial reconciliation and mutual love. It was a lovely sight. It was worthy of an angel's visit from the skies. When, upon the close of the Revolutionary struggle, the intelligence was received that preliminaries of peace were signed in Paris, what a wave of delight passed over the whole land! The doorkeeper of Congress Hall, we are told, swooned with joy. What bonfires, what illuminations, and what rejoicings, everywhere! every eye sparkled; every tongue was loosed; every face was dressed in smiles, and every heart thrilled with rapture! O, it was a blessed scene! It was a glorious affair! But peace with God! how infinitely more delightful, more joyous, must this be! Peace with him who holds our lives in his hand, our souls, our all; who can raise us to heaven, or sink us down to hell; who can

make us happy, or miserable to all eternity. Peace with God! what joy on earth and in heaven! The tidings are carried to the world above; heaven rings jubilee; saints and angels tune their harps anew, and pæans loud and sweet are heard throughout all the realms of glory! And well may it be so, for an immortal soul is snatched from ruin; the fires of the pit are quenched; the great God of heaven and earth becomes the sinner's Friend!—yea, smiles with ineffable sweetness upon him, and for him prepares a sparkling crown, a throne of glory, and joys which shall never end! And, to make this glorious peace better still, it is settled upon a sure foundation—it is through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is purchased by his death, it is inspired by his Spirit, and guaranteed by the blood of his cross. If this peace were dependant upon anything in us, it would be most precarious; but no, thank God, we have this peace through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is ever worthy, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever! O! how will the possession of this peace sweeten the bitterest cup, and brighten the darkest scene! How it will soften the dying hour, and cause the Christian to exult and triumph amid the solemnities of the last closing scene! But this is not all. 2. Being justified by faith, we have not only peace with God, but we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. We are not only pardoned, we are accepted. We are permitted to come into the presence-chamber of our God, with all the feeling of a child, and all the assurance of Divine love.

“Our faith shall Abba, Father, cry,  
And thou the kindred own!”

A rebel may be pardoned by his prince, and yet not be permitted to come into his presence. Absalom's crime in slaying his brother Ammon was forgiven by David, his father, but he must not see his face. "Let him not see my face," said David. But here is the blessedness of a state of justification with God; it not only brings us into a state of peace with God, but nearness to him—yes, permits us by faith to draw near unto God, with all holy reverence and assurance, as children to a father, able and ready to help us in every time of need. O blessed state! O glorious privilege! How precious to the patriarch Jacob when, fearing the wrath of Esau, he turned aside and prayed this prayer: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, Lord, lest he come and smite me, and the mother, and the children." How precious to king Hezekiah, when sick, and admonished by the prophet to prepare for death, he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, and wept sore, and was heard in that which he feared. And how precious is this privilege to the people of God in every age—what time afflictions come, and the waves of sorrow begin to roll! Yes, what though the sunshine of prosperity be clouded, and the dark night of affliction environ us on every side; what though the dew of death be upon our cold brow, and the shades of death be upon our faded eye; what though we be in the very midst of the dark valley, and the waves be rolling at our feet—if God, as our covenant God and Father, be with us, we have a sweet solace—we are safe—we are happy! for our days of mourning are ended, and heaven is at hand.

But this leads me to speak of a third benefit connected with a state of justification with God. Not only have we peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ—not only have we also nearness of access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, we are permitted to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. This was what Moses so much desired. And Moses said unto God, “I beseech thee, show me thy glory.” And the Lord said unto Moses, “I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, I will put thee into a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand, for there shall no man see me and live.” But in heaven there shall be no occasion for the cleft of a rock, nor for the covering, for there we shall see God face to face—we shall the king in his beauty—shall see him amid all the splendors of that eternal world of glory! O, how rapturous will this vision be, and how transforming! for there, we all, as with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Brethren! bright prospects are before the believer; great things are in reserve for him. A crown of glory, a throne of glory, a weight of glory, an eternal weight of glory, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory! Yes, child of God, hear it, and let your heart leap for joy! When you reach your eternal home, you will have glory above you, and glory beneath you, and glory around you! You will swim in glory as in the sun-light of heaven! All these things are in reserve for you, and you may rejoice in the sure hope of



them. Yes, you need not wait until the heavens are rolled together as a scroll. You need not wait until the voice of the archangel shall announce that your coronation day is come. No, nor wait even until this mortality shall have put on immortality ; you are now permitted to anticipate things to come ; you are even now permitted to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. O ! who would not be a Christian ? Sinner, would you ? Then come to Christ. He calls, he bids you come. O, come now ! God help you to come ! Amen !

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## SERMON V.

### NAAMAN.

Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? May I not wash in them and be clean ? So he turned and went away in a rage.—2 KINGS V. 12.

The account given of Naaman in this chapter is truly interesting and instructive. It furnishes an exact delineation of the human character, and is a complete developement of the pride and carnality of the natural, or unrenewed man. Naaman was a great man, in the popular sense of that term. He had been raised to a high military station, and had justified the confidence reposed in him. Leading forth the hosts of the king of Syria, he marched against the enemies of his country. He was victorious, and returned to Syria crowned with laurels, and greeted with the acclamations of his grateful countrymen. The

king himself honored him; and he was acknowledged by all, as the political saviour of his country; because that "by him the Lord had given deliverance to Syria." Crowned with laurels, and enriched with spoils, he stood upon a proud eminence; the boast of his country, the admiration of all! Yet there was one thing against him; one thing to humble the pride of his heart—he was a leper. This leprosy was a loathsome disease. It was a certain breaking out upon the body, and was of such a nature as to mar the beauty of the person, and to make him an object of loathing to those around: insomuch, that by a law of Moses, the leper was required to be separated from the congregation, as unclean, unfit to mingle with society: and we find that this law was rigidly enforced in every instance of leprosy. The highest characters in the nation were not exempted from its operation. Hence, you may recollect that when king Uzziah was smitten with leprosy in the house of the Lord, he was not only put out of the house of the Lord, but was driven from his palace; made to inhabit a separate house; and when he died, he was not buried in the royal sepulchre, but in a certain field belonging to the kings—because he was a leper! This being the case, we may well suppose that few wished to be Naaman, with all his wealth, his splendor, and renown. Indeed the Syrian conqueror would, no doubt, himself most willingly have exchanged a palace for a cottage, could he only in this way have been delivered from the leprosy which cleaved to him. Whilst you see Naaman seated under a gilded canopy, amid all the insignia of wealth and honor, per-

haps no other feelings are awakened in your bosom than those of loathing and disgust. You would not be a Naaman, with all his pomp, with all his riches, and with all his renown—and why? Because he is a leper! But now, whilst you turn away from a leprous Naaman—whilst your very heart sickens at the thought of his impurities—O tell me, may there not be some here, covered with a leprosy of a more loathsome, more dangerous kind? I mean the leprosy of sin. And what though this leprosy should not cut off the leper from the congregation and society here below—mark my word, if uncleansed, it must, it will, cut him off from a better congregation, and a more glorious society, in a better world than this; for,

“Those holy gates forever bar  
Pollution, sin, and shame;  
None shall obtain admittance there  
But followers of the Lamb.”

In speaking further from the words of our text, I wish to notice some points of resemblance between a leprous Naaman and an awakened sinner; and I am free to say, I do not think that the points of resemblance are very exact.

I. *Both are diseased.*—Naaman was a leper, so also is the sinner; and although the leprosy of the one was of a natural or physical character, and the leprosy of the other, moral or spiritual, yet in several particulars they strongly resemble each other. Was the leprosy of Naaman polluting? So also is the leprosy of sin. Indeed, there is nothing more polluting than sin. It mars all

beauty, and makes the subject thereof loathsome and abominable in the sight of a pure and holy God. Hence the language of Isaiah, "Wo is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." And hence, also, the language of the man of Uz: "I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Was the leprosy of Naaman destructive of happiness? There is nothing in all the universe more destructive of all happiness than sin. It is that which has ruined angels, and ruined man! It is that which has occasioned every tear of sorrow, every sigh of grief, and every pang of agony! It is that which has withered everything that is fair, blasted everything that is good, and made bitter everything that is sweet! It is that which has dried up every spring of comfort, and rolled a tide of sorrow far and wide! Was the leprosy of Naaman a deadly disease, not to be cured by any mortal power? So, also, is the leprosy of sin. It strikes its roots deep into the centre of the soul; generates therein a worm which shall never die; and kindles therein a fire never to be quenched. It spreads disease and death over the whole moral man! Yes, and the awakened sinner is sensible of his spiritual maladies. He remembers the words of the prophet: "The whole head is sick; the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." The understanding is darkened, the heart is hard, the will rebellious, and the conscience seared.



Everything is wrong! There is a deep and total depravity! If there be some good affections, they are mixed up with sin; if some amiable traits of character, they are like blocks of marble, and beautiful columns in a house not plumb; or, like the mechanism of a watch which has been magnetized, and therefore not fit for use. Something must be done! There must be some renovating process—aye, and something accomplished by a Divine power, or the sinner's case is hopeless. He is ruined and undone forever! But this leads me to remark,

II. *Both Naaman and the awakened sinner are miserable.*

They have trouble and distress—really can enjoy nothing. Naaman, crowned with laurels, and enriched with spoils, wanted nothing, it seems, to make him happy, but a healthful and vigorous body. Wanting this, the man is wretched. Ah! what is all the pomp of royalty—what all the splendor of wealth, and the delicacy of viands, to one unfitted to enjoy them? Even so it is with the awakened sinner. It may be fair and serene without; it is not so within, for the wicked are as the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. A sudden death alarms him; awful dispensations of Providence force painful convictions upon his mind; or, perchance, conflicting passions rage within, and make him wretched. Now, too, it may be, the sunshine of prosperity is darkened; the clouds of adversity are lowering around. The sinner feels, or thinks he feels, the mud-walled cottage trembling, breaking down, and, alas! for him, he has no building of God; no house made without hands, eternal, and on high! And now,

also, it may be, conscience wakes to sleep no more. Remorse for the past throws his thoughts upon the future ; worse dread of the future strikes them back upon the past ! He turns, and turns, and finds no ray. Does the clock strike, he is ready to cry out with the despairing, dying Altamont : " O time ! time ! it is fit that thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart ! How art thou fled forever ! A month, a day ; I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much which I have to do ! " Or, say, he is no despairing, dying Altamont. Is he an awakened sinner ? he is not at rest, he is not happy, he cannot be ! In the possession of riches, of honors, of " all the world calls good or great," " his heart distrustful asks, if this be joy ? " There is a burden upon his soul, the burden of sin, a burden too heavy for him to bear. Amid the pursuits of the day, his mind is thoughtful ; amid the shades of the night his eyes are wakeful. He sighs ! He groans inwardly. He knows not what to do. He knows not where to turn, is ready to ask, What must I do ? Is ready to cry out, God be merciful to me a sinner ! O yes, the awakened sinner is not happy ; he is miserable ; he feels wretched. He is perhaps, almost ready to wish he had never been born. He feels that he is a sinner, and knows not how to get rid of his sins. He knows he must die, and his conscience tells him that he is not prepared to die. He believes that after death comes the judgment, and alas ! what will become of him in the judgment day ! He is ready to exclaim, O that I were a Christian ! I would give the world only to have the Christian's hope ! This

leads me to notice another point of resemblance between a leprous Naaman and an awakened sinner.

III. *Both are willing to go far and do much to obtain a cure*—are willing to do anything, if they can obtain the object desired, *in their own way*. To be delivered from his leprosy, Naaman was willing, for a season, to withdraw from the splendors of a court, the adulations of his flatterers, and the caresses of his countrymen:—he was willing to come all the way from Syria to Samaria—moreover, he was willing to give ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment; nay, he was willing to do almost anything in the world if by that means he could get rid of the leprosy which cleaved to him. Just so it is with the awakened sinner; he is willing to go far and do much to obtain salvation. If he were required to perform penances, or go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, or brave the fury and storm of battle;—if he were required to bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be buried—or leap down the falls of Niagara, to secure salvation, I believe he would willingly do it!—anything if he can only be permitted to have his own way, and purchase salvation. O, how the awakened sinner does long to ride to heaven in a chariot of his own! How he does long to wash his robes, and make them white, by the labor of his own hand! A legal spirit is deeply seated in his bosom. It is a part of his unrenowned nature; hence, every sinner, when awakened, immediately goes about to work out his own righteousness. He goes from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, from resolution to resolution; thus endeavor-

ing to establish a righteousness of his own. Forgetting the words of the apostle, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast:" forgetting, I say, all this, he labors hard to merit salvation, and thus be his own Saviour. But, as a person may go one hundred leagues, and not reach a place only one mile distant—because he does not go in the right way—so many a sinner, greatly desiring to obtain salvation, has done much to obtain it, and yet has failed. And why? Because he has indulged in a legal spirit—has sought salvation by the works of the law, and not by faith. This leads to another point of resemblance between the Syrian leper and the awakened sinner:

IV. *Both are at first dissatisfied with the remedy proposed.* Although Naaman knew that his leprosy was a loathsome and deadly disease; although he was willing to come all the way from Syria to Samaria; although he was willing to part with his talents of silver, and his changes of raiment; although he was willing to do almost anything in the world to be cured of his leprosy; yet, when he comes to the house of the prophet, and finds how simple and humiliating are the terms proposed, his pride is wounded, and he turns away in a rage. Mark the pride of the man! "What!" says he, "surely the prophet does not know who I am! Does he know that I am Syria's chieftain?—that I have come in pomp and splendor, with my horses and my chariot—with my silver and my gold? Does he know that I am the favorite of my king, and the idol of my countrymen?—that I am



a rich man, a great man, a man of war, and a mighty man? And will he not come out and pay me that respect due to my rank and character? He sends a messenger to me! A messenger! I expected more than this! Behold, I thought he himself would come out to me, and stand, and call upon the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper! I thought he would cure me in a manner comporting with my dignity. But not so! He sends a messenger to me! And, pray, what is his message? He tells me to go and bathe in Jordan seven times! And why in Jordan? Does not that contemptible stream belong to that contemptible people, many of whom I have recently conquered, and led captive into my own land? Then, why in Jordan! I see what the man would be aiming at! He would have me dip in Jordan, and thus acknowledge myself indebted to the Jews for a cure! I will die a leper first! What! such a man as I! a rich man, a mighty man, the conqueror of the Jews—such a man as I am, acknowledge myself indebted to the Jews for a cure! Not I! I'll die a leper a thousand times first! 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?' So he turned and went away in a rage. Wretched man! he would be wretched, because he would be proud. He is a leper, a loathsome leper, and yet he would be proud. What an admirable picture of; the natural, or unrenewed man! How exact to the very life! The sinner is a leper; he knows that the leprosy of sin is upon him; that it has spread over his whole

moral system; that it is working disease and death within him, and if not removed, will cut him off from heaven, and ruin him forever. In these circumstances, he asks with more or less anxiety, what he must do to be saved: and when told, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved"—O, these terms are too hard and unreasonable! They are too simple—too humbling. They do not suit his proud and lofty soul; and he turns away in a rage. Yes, the heart of the sinner rises up against this way of salvation. Sometimes there is a positive enmity awakened, and the sinner would almost rather not be saved at all, than to be saved in a manner so galling to his proud and carnal heart. If salvation were put up at auction, he would bid high for it; but to be saved in the way pointed out in the gospel—this does not suit his taste—does not fall in with the feelings of his unsanctified heart! He objects to this plan; he turns away from it, and would choose rather to be saved in some other way; and when told, that "other foundation can no man lay, than is laid, which is Jesus Christ," he does not like it; and when it is pressed upon him, like Naaman, he turns away, and is ready to say: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" In other words, May I not be saved in my own way?

It may here be proper to inquire why the sinner is not pleased with the plan proposed in the gospel. One might suppose that the sinner, feeling himself to be a sinner, and knowing himself to be exposed to the wrath and

curse of God, would be willing to be saved in any way. But no, we find it a universal fact, that the sinner tries his own plan first, and never will fall in with Heaven's plan, until he finds that absolutely he must, or he must perish forever. The fact is well known ; the reasons may be these :

First: The plan of salvation proposed in the gospel strips the sinner of his self-righteousness. All unconverted persons, but especially those who have been more moral and genteel, those who have moved in respectable circles, and who have been classed with the benevolent and honourable ones of the day, are apt to imagine that they have something to recommend them, even in the sight of God their Maker. They are sinners. no doubt, but not great sinners. " Why ! what harm have I done ? I have injured no man ; I have defrauded no man ; I am no liar, no drunkard, no gambler ; I never swear, except when I am angry ; I pay all my debts ; I have respect for good ministers, and go to hear them, and, according to my means, I contribute to their support. Moreover, I am a member of the Bible Society, and give to many benevolent institutions ; and now, pray, what lack I yet ?" The sum of the matter is this : the sinner begins with the confession that he is a sinner, and winds up with the belief that he is a pretty good man ; and that his good deeds entitle him, at least, to some consideration. But the gospel comes, and addresses him, not as a pretty good man, but as a sinner, a great sinner, a lost and ruined sinner. The gospel tells him that his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; that his whole life has been a life

of departure from God; that his best actions have been mixed with sin; and that, in the sight of his Maker, all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; that the prayer of the publican suits him as truly as any other, and that if he ever is saved, it must be purely by grace, and in Christ alone. Now this does not fall in with his self-righteous feelings. He wishes some respect shown to him, on account of his being rather better than some others; and is not willing to be placed on the same platform with the vilest of sinners, and, like them, be saved entirely on the score of free grace. This is too humbling to the pride of his heart; and when he is told that it is even so, that in the sight of God he is also a great sinner, a vile sinner, and if ever saved, "Christ must be all his hope, and grace and all song;" this doctrine does not suit him; and, when insisted upon, he is displeased, and is ready to say, What is the use of being so rigid and precise? May not a more genteel and fashionable religion answer just as well, and a little better too? "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turns away in a rage. Unhappy sinner! He would be unhappy because he would be self-righteous and proud. O how hard it is for the sinner to feel that he is a sinner, a guilty, hell-deserving sinner! How hard for him to realize that he lies low in the ruins of the fall! that in the sight of a pure and holy God he is vile, and if ever saved, it must be by grace, and grace alone! This is so galling, so humbling to his proud and lofty soul. Pride is his very nature. O this pride, this abominable pride!



How it blocks up the way to heaven ! How it bars up against him the gates of glory ! Now, permit me to say, this pride must be brought down—as it is written, “The Lord resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.” And again, “The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be laid low ; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.”

Secondly : Another reason why the sinner does not, at first, like the plan proposed in the gospel is this : On account of the self-denial which it exacts.

“ Deny thyself and take thy cross,  
Is the Redeemer’s great command.”

Now, this is a hard saying. Who can hear it ? The sinner, perhaps, is young, and in the midst of all the pleasurable scenes of life ; and he is told, if he becomes a Christian he must deny himself ; he must renounce the world, with all its pomps and vanities ; he must come out from the world, withdraw from places of fashionable resort, give up all sinful pleasures ; break away from his irreligious companions, no longer go with them in the flowery and devious paths of sin. The spirit of the world he must not indulge in. He must repudiate its maxims, its manners, and everything that is opposed to the genius of a religion that is holy, and heavenly, and divine. He must not suffer “the lust of the flesh, nor the lust of the eye, nor the pride of life,” to have dominion over him any more. He must set his face and heart against sin of every kind, whether fashionable or unfashionable, whether profitable or unprofitable, whether plea-

surable or not. He must be willing to take the yoke of Christ upon him, and maintain a holy singularity ; aye, and “ touch not, taste not, handle not ” anything that is offensive to God, or polluting to the soul. This is not pleasant to the sinner. He is willing to give up some sins, but not all—some worldly amusements but not all. He does not like strict rules ; he does not like religious restraints. He wishes to go along with the world, at least to a certain extent. He wishes to have some latitude in the matter of worldly pursuits and pleasures, and he does not like to be so bound up as not to be permitted occasionally, to attend dancing parties in the evening, or pleasurable excursions on the Sabbath, or to resent injuries. He is much disposed to compromise matters ; to enjoy religion and the world too. But the gospel is stern and uncompromising. The sinner must give up every sin ; though dear as a right eye, he must pluck it out ; though dear as a right hand, he must cut it off. Yea, he must live denied to *all* ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world. Now, thinks he, Is not this carrying matters a little too far ? Is not this fanaticism ? What is the use of being so strict and strait-laced ? What is the use of being righteous overmuch ? May not a more genteel and accommodating religion answer just as well, and even a little better ? “ Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? May I not wash in them and be clean ? ” So he turns away in a rage. Unhappy sinner ! He would be unhappy, because he does not wish to deny himself of all ungodliness and

worldly lust. He does not wish, entirely, to let go his hold upon the world. There is some darling sin, some beloved lust or idol, which he still wishes to enjoy ; and religion won't let him ; hence the warfare and the battle in the sinner's soul !

A third reason why the sinner does not, at first, like the plan proposed in the gospel, is the spirituality which it requires. I never knew an unregenerate man spiritual in all my life. He may take much pleasure in forms and ceremonies, but for that which is truly spiritual he has no relish. The homage of a lip-service, and the compliment of a bended knee, he may be willing to offer to his Maker, but his heart is not in the matter. His spirit is not devout, never truly and deeply devout. He runs over the surface of things, and greatly prefers the form to the power of godliness. He takes no pleasure in drawing near to God, nor is he much inclined to pray in secret, nor to worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. He has no objection, it may be, to converse about religion in general, and is willing to hear what he calls a good sermon, but he is not remarkably fond of plain, pungent, and practical preaching. If the minister has an agreeable person and a fine voice ; if he is graceful in his gestures and has a brilliant imagination ; if he can deal in flowers of rhetoric, or spread an intellectual treat before his hearers, he can listen to him, it may be, for one full hour. But let the man of God wax warm ; let him lay aside his beautiful things, and come down to the law and to the testimony ; let him speak about the claims of the law, its extent and spirituality ; let him thunder out his anathe-

mas against the sinner; let him repeat what is written, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" let him press the necessity of repentance and faith, and reiterate the language of the Saviour, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," then the sinner's attention begins to flag. He begins to be restless and uneasy; thinks the sermon too long; and secretly resolves that he will come to hear that man no more. "I don't like these preachers these days," said a certain man who had been listening to an awakening preacher during a season of revival; "I dont like these preachers these days, they make one feel so bad." Here the secret is revealed. Whilst the minister was dealing in beautiful things, and general things, the sinner's conscience was not disturbed; but when the claims of the law were presented, and the sinner's guilt and danger were made to start up before his mind, his carnal security was interrupted. He began to see that he was not quite so good as he had imagined himself to be. There was a sinking at his heart, an unwelcome peradventure that, notwithstanding all his fond and cherished hopes, his state might not be so safe after all. No, no! he does not wish religion to have full dominion over him. It will interfere with some of his pursuits and schemes, and he is much disposed to say, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." The sinner will, perhaps, read the Bible; but he has no particular relish for the Psalms of David, nor Paul's Epistles. He greatly prefers the narrative and historical portions, and



will speak in high terms of the Bible. "The Bible! the Bible!" he will say; "Why, sir, the Bible is the best book in the world! The doctrines, how sublime! The precepts, how perfect! The parables, how beautiful! There is the parable of the prodigal son, and the parable of the good Samaritan; why, sir, these are some of the finest specimens of moral painting ever presented to an admiring world! Sooner shall the seraph's voice loose its melody, than these parables cease to charm!" But now, should the person with whom he is conversing say, "It pleases me much, sir, to find that you think so highly of the sacred volume; but, as that book lays great stress upon the doctrine of the new birth, or regeneration, will you permit me to ask you one question? Do you really think, sir, that you have experienced this spiritual change, without which no one can enter heaven?" "I would be glad," replies he, "to know what you think about infants. Do you think all infants will be saved?" Let the pious friend rejoin, "Sir, I believe that those who die in infancy are saved; but I was not talking about infants. I was, with all respect, inquiring about your hopes for eternity. I greatly desire your salvation; I wish you to dig deep, and lay a good foundation for eternity; will you, therefore, permit me to press the question, Do you really think that you are a converted man?" "Can you tell me, sir," says he, "who was Melchizedek? Without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of years! Why, who can this be?"

My brethren, I suppose you understand this matter; the case is drawn from real life. The sinner is willing to

talk on the subject of religion in a certain way, but he wishes not to have anything of a spiritual nature pressed upon him; nothing that will trouble his conscience, or lead to any great searchings of heart. The fact is, as yet, he is not a spiritual man, and therefore does not like spiritual things. He has no objection to the forms of godliness, but the power of it he understands not. When, therefore, he is told that he must worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and truth; that he must pray in secret; that he must remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; that he must live by faith, and walk by faith, and that he must see to it that his heart is right in the sight of God: in a word, when spiritual duties and exercises are insisted upon, and he is told that he must continually strive to have the Spirit of him who said, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ"—these things, in his estimation, are hard requirements; they are distasteful to him; they are deemed unnecessary and puritanical; and when urged, he is much inclined to be offended, and turning away in disgust, his spirit utters the language of Naaman, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" Thus the sinner is still unhappy, because opposed to the gospel plan. O! how he longs to be saved in his own way! but the Bible will not permit him, and hence the struggles in the sinner's bosom—the warfare and the battle in the sinner's soul.

A fourth and last reason which I shall mention, why the sinner does not at first, relish the plan proposed in

the gospel, is this: It requires him to **accept** the Saviour cordially, in all his offices. In the sacred volume, the blessed Redeemer is exhibited in a great variety of characters, but in none does he appear as he should in the eyes of the sinner. Is Jesus a *Prophet*? What occasion for such a teacher to instruct him? "The light of reason," and the sentiments of the learned, he thinks, will answer just as well. Is Jesus a *Priest*? What occasion has he for such a one to intercede and atone for him? Tears of repentance, and moral reformation, he thinks, are all-sufficient to secure his pardon. Is Jesus Christ a *King*? The proud sinner wants no king to rule in and reign over him. His lips are his own—who is Lord over him! Is Jesus a *Physician*? To be sure, the sinner knows that there is a moral leprosy upon him, but he hopes the case is not so bad after all. Why may not the "balsam of tears" and the "opiates of morality" effect a speedy cure? And as for this Fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness, what occasion is there for that? "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turns away in a rage. How exact are the points of resemblance between Naaman and the awakened sinner! Surely this fragment of history was recorded, to present with liveliness, in a figure, the case of the awakened sinner, in every place, and in every age! One point of resemblance more, and I have done.

V. *Both are shut up to the remedy proposed; it is that, or death!*—This is a most important point of resemblance,

and one which must never be forgotten. Both are shut up to the remedy proposed; it is that, or death! When Naaman, not pleased with the terms stated, turned away, observe, the prophet did not call him back; the prophet proposed no compromise. Dip in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be cleansed—refuse, and take the consequences. Even so, in the case of the sinner. Let him, by faith, cordially accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved! reject him, and the sinner must perish! Positively, there is no other hope for him! for nothing can be more clear and settled than this declaration, “There is salvation in none else;” and this, “Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” And in substance, this solemn truth was announced by the Saviour himself, in his last charge to his disciples: “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.” There has been no change, no compromise; there never will be! for the way of salvation, like the Saviour himself, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Hence the language of the apostle: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?” There is no escape! The sinner who rejects Christ, rejects the only Saviour, the only remedy. He cannot be saved by his own works of righteousness; he cannot be saved by the intercession of saints, nor purgatorial sufferings. Jesus Christ is the sinner’s last and only hope, and if the sinner will not accept of Christ, he must perish! he must die eternally! he must be lost forever! O that the sinner would believe



this truth, this great Bible truth, and come to Christ before it is forever too late!

When Naaman turned away from the house of the prophet—when he resolved to return to Syria, and brave the consequences, rather than submit to terms so galling to the pride of his heart—in these circumstances, it so happened that he had with him certain servants; who seem to have had a great respect for their master; they greatly desired that he might be cured; and to them the opportunity of obtaining a cure seemed a precious one, and the terms by no means hard, or unreasonable: “And they came near unto him, and spake unto him, and said My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much, rather, when he saith unto thee, wash and be clean!” The argument was a good one; Naaman felt its force. He saw that he was a poor leper, and that pride was not made for him! He saw that his case was a desperate one. He could not cure himself;—no one in Syria could remove his leprosy. Here was an opportunity, and one only. Had he not better be a little humbled, than live and die a loathsome leper? Had he not better give up his lofty notions, and take the prophet on his own terms? Yes, the urgency of the case demands it; and the terms are not hard. Jordan is not far off, and how simple, how easy, to dip as the prophet directed! Reason has triumphed! the servants have prevailed! the proud conqueror, the haughty Naaman yields! “Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh came

again unto him as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean!" Methinks I see him coming out of Jordan, cleansed of his leprosy—a new man! How his eyes sparkle! What joy beams in every feature of his countenance! He smiles! He can scarcely believe in the change wrought! It is too good to be true! Surely it must be some sweet dream! "Servants! is it true? Is your master's leprosy gone?" "Yes, master, gone! It is just as the prophet has said. Your face is fair and beautiful; your flesh is as the flesh of a little child!" "O blessed prophet! O faithful servants! O happy! happy me!" Methinks I hear the Syrian exclaim—"Yes, blessed prophet! faithful servants! and happy! happy! thrice happy me! What a blessed hour! what a blessed change is this to me! How I rejoice that my pride came down! How glad I am that I came to the house of the prophet, and, especially, that I at length yielded to his terms! This is the happiest hour of my life; more happy than when, on the field of battle, I proved a conqueror! more happy than when I was welcomed home, with greetings, and acclamations, by my royal master, and my grateful countrymen! And now, when I return to Syria, and all shall see that my leprosy is cleansed, how with new joy they will greet me again! Will not my wife be made happy? Will not all my acquaintances be filled with wonder and delight? Yes, the voice of joy and gratulation will salute me on every hand! Surely, we shall have a blessed jubilee!"

Is there an awakened sinner here? Is there one in this large assembly who is sensible that a spiritual leprosy

cleaves to him? Is he distressed by reason of his disease? Is he willing to go far and do much to obtain a cure? And yet, is he dissatisfied with Heaven's plan of saving the sinner? Is he in the indulgence of a proud and self-righteous spirit, endeavoring to work out his own salvation in his own way? Is he unwilling to humble himself at the foot of the cross—unwilling to be wholly indebted to Christ for salvation? If there be such a one present, I would act towards him as Naaman's servants did towards the Syrian leper. I would come near, I would reason, I would expostulate, I would entreat. My father! my mother! my friend! O my fellow sinner! if the prophet—if Jesus Christ had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, when he says, Wash and be clean! If he had bid you traverse oceans and scale mountains; if he had bid you brave the fury and storm of battle; if he had bid you bestow all your goods to feed the poor, and give your body to be burned—would you not have been willing to do all this, and even more, to secure your salvation? How much rather, then, when he says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Look unto me and be saved all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside me there is none else." O how simple is the way of salvation! "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The sinner cannot save himself. He is not required to do it. A Saviour is provided, an all-sufficient and most glorious Saviour—one who is able and willing to save unto the uttermost, all who will come unto God through him.

This blessed Saviour, having made the great atoning sacrifice, can bestow pardon and life upon the very chief of sinners, the vilest of the vile. Only let the sinner come to Christ, in all the overflowings of a penitent and believing heart, his leprosy will be healed. Awakened sinner! this is the way! How simple! Stumble not at its simplicity. How reasonable! Then quarrel no longer with Heaven's plan. Again I say, if the prophet—if Jesus Christ had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? how much rather when he says, "Wash and be clean—believe and be saved." What hinders you? Is it a self-righteous spirit? Are you righteous even in your own account? Has your conscience never troubled you? Do you not know, do you not feel that you are a sinner—that your sins are numerous, and highly aggravated? How do you propose to get rid of your sins? They cleave to you; no mortal power can remove them. Believe me, in the sight of a pure and holy God you would have no righteousness to boast of, even if you were as pure a man as Isaiah; for he confessed that all his righteousnesses were as filthy rags; and on a certain occasion, he cried out, "Wo is me, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King the Lord of Hosts!" But I ask again, what hinders the sinner from falling in with the gospel plan? He is proud—too proud to be saved by free grace—too proud to be indebted to Christ alone for salvation. Proud! and proud of what? Of a rebellious will? of a seared conscience? of a sinful life? of a



hard heart? Proud! Of what? That he is a loathsome leper? a condemned sinner? an heir of wrath? and a child of the devil? Proud! Of what? Of riches? Some of the vilest on earth are rich. Of beauty? Beauty! "The grave discredits thee. How are thy charms expunged! thy roses faded, and thy lilies soiled?" Proud! Of what? Of talents? "With the talents of an angel a man may be a fool." Proud! Of what? Of splendor and renown? Behold, the Lord of hosts doth take away the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the prudent and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the eloquent orator. Ah! my brethren! pride was never made for man. The sick chamber may teach him this, and so, emphatically, may death and the grave. A sinner proud! One whose soul is a mass of sin, and whose body must soon moulder in the tomb! I repeat it, pride was never made for poor sinful man. No! the dust is his place, and the prayer of the publican his appropriate prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner." And now, haughty Naaman, let your pride come down. Turn your chariot, and go to Jordan. Yield, O yield to the terms of the prophet, and let your leprosy pass away! O sinner! sinner! be persuaded to fall in with the terms of the gospel! Yield your heart to Christ; you will never repent it.

Did Naaman repent complying with the terms of the prophet? No, he rejoiced with exceeding great joy—he rejoiced in it to his dying day! And so will you, and not to your dying day only, but to all eternity. I have

seen sinners coming to Christ. I have seen them in the day of their conversion. O what a blessed moment! what a glorious change! The soul has new feelings; the heart has new joy! Everything within is pleasant; everything around is lovely. The sun shines more brightly, and the birds sing more sweetly. The flowers are more beautiful, and even the grass looks more green. Yes, it is even so. Sometimes the young convert feels as if he had entered into a new world—rejoices with joy unspeakable, and full of glory—yea, “has a young heaven begun below, and glory in the bud.” Tell me not that this is fanaticism! If it be, it is the fanaticism of the pentecostal converts, for we are told that “they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God.” It is the fanaticism of those who were converted in Samaria, for we are told that “there was great joy in that city. When the Philippian jailor was converted, according to the Scriptures he rejoiced in God with all his house. And what is said of the church when he was brought under the influence of God’s converting grace? “He, also, went on his way rejoicing.” This is no fanaticism. It is all perfectly reasonable and natural. Should a poor man suddenly become rich, or a sick man all at once find himself in strong health—should a person who was sleeping in a dungeon wake up in a palace, or he who was in a wilderness find himself in a garden—how sweet would be the surprise! how delightful the feelings! Even so it is with him who passes from a state of nature to a state of grace.

"When God revealed his gracious name,  
 And changed my mournful state :  
 My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,  
 The grace appeared so great !"

Well may there be joy, yea "rapture," in the soul, seeing that everything in relation to the sinner has undergone so great and pleasing a change. The bond-slave of the devil has become the freedman of Christ, and the heir of glory! O that many hearts may even now yield, and and may this be the birth-day of many a precious soul!

When Naaman returned to Syria, cleansed of his leprosy, no doubt there were rejoicings there! How joyfully must his friends have greeted him, now returned safe and sound! and O how happy, especially, must have been his kindred, the members of his family! Surely the voice of joy and gratulation was heard on every hand! Surely there must have been a jubilee for many days! And now, should the awakened sinner come to Christ, what joy would this inspire in many bosoms! This would be an occasion long to be remembered. Yes, only let these anxious souls who are weeping—only let them come to Christ, and we shall have a jubilee here too! O how that pious father would rejoice in the conversion of his son! How that pious mother, who for years has been praying for her daughter—how she would press her to her bosom with feelings of new delight that beloved daughter, once careless, now a Mary at the feet of her Redeemer! How would the pious wife rejoice over the conversion of her husband! and the pious husband over

the conversion of his wife! How brothers and sisters would rush into each other's arms, and give glory to God, that now, at last, they were going to heaven hand to hand! I have beheld such scenes. They bring us near to heaven. O for the yielding of hearts! the breaking down of strongholds! God grant us a pentecostal time, a blessed jubilee now, even in this place, and at this time! O Lord, revive thy work! Let the people praise thee, let all this people praise thee! Amen, and Amen!

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## SERMON VI.

### THE EXAMPLE OF ELI.

For I have told him, that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.—1 SAMUEL iii. 13.

THE case of Eli is melancholy, yet full of instruction; and whilst there is a parent on earth, it will sound an alarm, which must and will be heard. Eli was high-priest, and was, upon the whole, a good man; but in one thing he was much to be blamed—he neglected parental duty—"His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Bending now beneath the load of age, this good, but too indulgent parent, had retired from the active duties of the priesthood. These duties had devolved upon his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; but, alas! they were



“sons of Belial;” for, although ministering as priests, in the service of the Lord, they were openly immoral! Indeed, so shameful were the immoralities of the young men, that “men abhorred the offering of the Lord.” Eli, it is true, was probably not an eye-witness of his sons’ immoralities, but he was not ignorant of them; for we are told that he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, but he restrained them not. To be sure, he did not pass over the matter entirely in silence. No, he reasoned, he expostulated, and even reprovèd them, saying, “Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil doings, by all this people; nay, my sons, it is no good report that I hear of you. You make the Lord’s people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?” Thus he reasoned, and expostulated, and gently reprovèd, but restrained them not. This was not enough. The sins of the young men were flagrant, and called for stronger measures. He ought to have rebuked them sharply. He ought to have exerted his authority, and put these sons of Belial out of the priesthood. But, no! his too indulgent spirit, his overweening fondness—perhaps I should rather say, his criminal weakness—caused him to neglect parental duty; and what was the consequence? Terrible, indeed! God’s righteous anger is kindled, and it burns fiercely, against the household of this venerable, but unhappy old man. The first alarming intimations of divine wrath is made by a prophet who, divinely commissioned, comes to Shiloh, and rings an awful peal in the ears of Eli, predicting heavy

judgments just at hand. Shortly after this, the Lord appeared to Samuel by night, and said unto him: "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle! In that day, I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end: for I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not; therefore have I sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever." These were not vain words. At this time, there was war between the Israelites and the Philistines. To animate and encourage the former, the ark of God was carried from Shiloh into their camp. Hophni and Phinehas, as officiating priests, went along with the ark. When the ark was brought into the camp of Israel, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again! When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, and understood the occasion thereof, they were terrified, and cried out, saying, "God is come into the camp! Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods? These are the gods which smote the Egyptians with all the plagues, in the wilderness." Nevertheless, they encouraged each other, saying, "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men and fight!"

And now the contending forces rush to battle. The

clash of arms is heard. The battle rages. The earth is red with blood! Eli, all anxiety, is seated at the gate of the city. From an elevated seat he looks towards the battlefield, watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. Suddenly a man of Benjamin is seen coming in haste, with his clothes rent, and dust upon his head! What is the matter? Ah! he brings evil tidings! "What is there done, my son?" exclaims Eli, all alarm and anxiety—"What is there done, my son?" And the messenger answered and said, "Israel is fled! There has been a great slaughter amongst the people! Thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead, and the ark of God is taken!" O the poor old man! See! he sinks! he has swooned away! he has fallen! "And when Eli heard that the ark of God was taken, he fell off from his seat, backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy." Methinks as he heard of the disasters of the day, he exclaimed, "God of heaven, this is thy righteous judgment! My sons made themselves vile, and I restrained them not, and they are cut off in the midst of their sins! My sons profaned the ark of God, and, woe upon woe! it also is taken!" Ah! my brethren, this is more than the poor old man can bear! He swoons! he falls backward from his seat upon the ground. His neck breaks, and he dies! The wife of Phinehas, too, not far off, hears the dismal tidings. She gives a piercing shriek! Premature pangs come upon her; she groans in anguish; names her child *Ichabod*, (which means the glory is departed,) and dies! O, day of disaster! O, .

scene of no common mourning! Only see! on yonder field of battle lie two impious sons, weltering in their gore! Near the gate of the city, the old man, prostrate upon the ground, dead, and his silvery locks dishonored in the dust! And not far off, a daughter-in-law shrieks and expires! And now, over this scene of disaster and war, methinks the voice of an invisible one thrills through the air—"For I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not; therefore have I sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever!"

There are parents in this assembly; it may be in many respects good parents, but perhaps some of them are Elis—good parents, but they neglect parental duty. O, what a serious matter this is! It is, alas! too common, and who can tell the evils flowing from it, even from generation to generation! If there be any present who are walking in the footsteps of the too indulgent and unhappy Eli, I would desire, at this time, to address them with much plainness, and yet with great kindness and respect, remembering that I am also a parent, and perhaps need rebuke and counsel as well as they. I could wish myself better qualified to speak upon the subject than I am; yet it may not be amiss for me here simply to say, that however deficient I myself may have been in the matter of parental duty, yet I would say, to the praise of God's grace, that I have the prospect of meeting my whole family unbroken in heaven; and every child, save one, was hopefully converted in the morning of life.



Our text is rarely taken. Too seldom is the subject of parental duty, or family government, presented from the sacred desk; and this, perhaps, is one reason, that teachers of common schools, and officers in seminaries of learning of a higher character, so frequently have occasion to complain of "bad boys," and boys that are rude, and difficult to be controlled. I know that oftentimes there is a fault in the nursery, and that some mothers are not happy in the management of their children; permitting their children to rule them, when they should rule their children. Perhaps the mother is deficient in the matter of sound judgment; or may not be uniform; or perhaps she cannot control herself, and therefore cannot control those committed to her charge. But there are cases of this kind:—the mother does everything which a wise and prudent mother ought to do, in the training of her children; but her boys are getting rather beyond her control, she needs help from the other parent, and this help is not afforded. Fathers! listen! I have heard many complaints of this kind. O, ye who are emphatically heads of your families—kings in your own household—remember! very much depends upon you. Some fathers are disposed to excuse themselves. Their business, they think, is "to make money," and provide for their families, and, as Shunamite father, when he was with his reapers in the field, and his little boy came to him sick and cried, My head! only replied, Carry him to his mother—for he was too busy to attend to such matters—even so, at the present day, too many fathers neglect their children, turning them over to the

care of the mother. Thus did not Abraham, for, what said the Almighty concerning him? "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord," The general subject of family government is, however, not at this time to be presented. There is, now, only one branch of parental duty to which I would particularly call your attention, and that is, the duty of restraining children from the indulgence of things which are vicious and vile.

I. Parents should restrain their children from indulging in evil passions. Certain strong feelings of the soul may be highly useful. If, in their exercise, they are confined to proper limits, they give promptness and energy to the character; but they must be properly controlled. They are like fire, "good servants, but bad masters," and require early attention, and all proper restraints. If neglected by the parent, they are apt to grow with the growth and strengthen with the strength of the child; and too frequently, they are permitted to get the mastery, even in early life. How often have I seen petted and spoiled children raging with angry passions, and even treating with indignity those who gave them birth. If ever parental authority should be exercised, if ever the rod of correction should be used, this is the time; for the indulgence of violent passions has proved the ruin of many. O how many hands have been stained with blood! and how many families have been clothed in mourning! and how many poor souls have been sent unprepared to their last account, by the indulgence of evil

passions, which ought to have been controlled, but were not, in the nursery !

I saw a boy once, not twelve years of age, in a prison, who, in a fit of passion, had murdered one of his companions ! And I saw another, not ten years old, who, in a paroxysm of rage, had hung himself ! Moreover, I can mention an incident that occurred some years ago, which strongly illustrates the evil of not controlling children in early life.

An elder of my church, (a most lovely and venerable man, but an Eli, if there ever was one in modern times,) had a son who, when about twenty years of age, being angry with his father one evening, seized his venerable parent by the hair of his head, and endeavored to throw him out of the window of a two-story house. And now, mark ! what did this young man the next morning, when the violence of his passions had subsided ? Did he fall upon his kness and beg his father's forgiveness ? No ! he added insult to injury. When his father reminded him of his outrageous conduct, he replied, " Sir, it is your own fault ! you ought to have restrained me when I was a child."

Parents ! think upon these things, and when you see your children excited, calm them. When you see their passions kindling, hold them in check. Do not even suffer them, when excited, to speak loudly, for it is common for persons to become more excited by hearing their own voice ; as a lion is said to lash himself into a fury by the rapid movement of his own tail. And above all, beware how, by precept or example, you teach your

children lessons of revenge. I have known a mother to strike a chair, against which her child had fallen and hurt itself; and who, affecting passion, said, "Naughty thing! Strike it, my dear! Mother will not let it hurt her darling!" And there are fathers who will not only suffer themselves to be thrown into a passion in the presence of their children, but will, positively, teach them with violence to resent all injuries. "My son," said a certain parent, "you are going to school; if a boy strikes you, and you do not return the blow, I will correct you." How much better would be this counsel and this language: "My son, you are going to school. Be respectful and kind to all your playmates, and they will be respectful and kind to you; for the Bible says, 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.'" Parents would do well to require their children to commit to memory this passage of Scripture: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city;" and nothing better than frequently to repeat, in their hearing, what is said of the blessed Saviour: "When he was reviled, he reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not." And also, that even when upon the cross, he prayed for his murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." But, parents, if after all good counsel, and this enforced by a good example, you find your children will indulge in vindictive and angry passions, you know your duty—restrain them! But,

II. Parents should restrain their children from uttering



falsehood, or, in plainer language, from telling lies. No vice is more sinful or degrading; none marks a more depraved heart than this. And yet, some children seem to be strangely addicted to it, even in early childhood. Indeed, the Bible says, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Vile and abominable as this vice is, there are some parents who do not frown upon it as they should. Nay, some even encourage it! not intentionally, it may be, and yet they do encourage it, and that in several ways. Permit me to mention a few. The child has told a story, a downright falsehood, and the parent smiles. And why? There was something amusing in it, or something smart; and the parent is evidently more pleased with the wit than displeased with the sin. This is not all. The story is told to the next person who steps in, and he must needs smile, and say something complimentary of the "little rogue," as he is playfully termed, or not please the doating parent. Another case: To induce the child to take some nauseous medicine, the parent tells the child it is sugar; the child takes the dose, and finds that a fraud was practised. Again: To induce the child to remain quietly at home, when the parents go to town, a promise is made that such a thing will be done, or such a present made; and the promise is broken. Take another case: A certain neighbor is present, and the parents profess wonderful friendship, are marvellously cordial; but as soon as he has retired, and the door is closed, they turn him into ridicule, or speak of him with great contempt; and this in the presence of

the child. Take another example: The child, through heedlessness, breaks a plate, and the parent, happening to be in a bad humor, slaps the child. The next day the child is detected in telling a downright lie, and the parent is contented with giving the child a gentle rebuke. What impression does this make? Why, certainly this: It is more sinful to break a plate than to tell a lie! Sometimes, also, parents, for the sake of amusement, or to excite wonder, will most grossly discolor narratives, and exaggerate matters of fact; and will, perhaps, even give fiction for truth. Ah! little do such parents think what evil they are doing to their offspring! Little do they think how they are sowing and watering the seeds of sin! how they are nourishing a germ which has within it poison and death! Parents should teach their children how odious and sinful all lying is; how offensive to God, and how certainly it will bring ruin upon the soul. It would be well to remind children frequently of what the Bible says: "The mouth of him that speaketh lies shall be stopped;" and again: "All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." "Mr. Baker," said a little boy to me in a certain place, "I can't tell a lie." I had just been addressing children and among other things, I had mentioned that a good little boy was a father's jewel, and a bad little boy was a father's plague. On coming out, I laid my hand upon the head of a sprightly, rosy-cheeked boy of five years of age, and said, "My little friend, are you your father's jewel?" "Mr. Baker," said he, "I can't tell a lie. I am my father's jewel." His father was a worthy elder of the

church, and had, no doubt, taught him the exceeding sinfulness of lying, and that truth, like the name of the ever blessed God, is most sacred, and must in no form or fashion be trifled with. Parents, attend to this matter! If your children are acquiring the habit of lying, remember, they are making themselves vile. Forget not your responsibility—restrain them!

III. Parents should restrain their children from profane swearing. There is something, however, so unnatural, and impious, and daring, in this vice, that children are not so apt to fall into it, as into some others; and yet there are boys, and even little boys, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness! Young and tender as they are, their unhallowed lips blaspheme their Maker, and pour out curses on all around. I have heard little children swearing in the streets; and I once knew a boy, not four years of age, who would swear most profanely, and curse his mother! His grandfather had taught him to do it—all in sport, it is true, but no less sinful on that account. And, sad to tell, that same little boy was laid in his grave only a few months after! And not long since, riding in the stage with a very profane young man, "Sir," said he to me, "my father used to tell me to curse the horses when they would not do as I wished them." That any bearing the sacred name of parents should, by precept, teach their offspring the language of profaneness, is almost incredible; and yet such there are. Surely, parents of this kind are monsters in human shape, and must be considered as standing forth, fair candidates for companionship with those foul spirits in the world of

woe, who blaspheme the God of heaven, because of their pains, and repent not. We do hope that the number of this frightful stamp of character is small; but we fear that there are, alas! too many, who, if they do not teach profaneness by precept, do it by practice, and this is nearly the same; for what is example, but a living or illustrated precept? O, venerated father! If you must swear, be entreated, don't do it in the presence of your dear little boy! He thinks that you are the best man upon the face of the earth; he thinks that whatever you do must be right. And shall his very respect for you be the occasion of his ruin? If you are about uttering an oath, if your boy be present, for the sake of that dear boy, if for no other reason, let that oath die unuttered upon your tongue. But there are some parents who will not teach their children to swear, either by precept or example, and who would by no means tolerate their swearing in their presence, who, nevertheless, care very little what language their children use when not in their presence, and who, even if told that their children are profane, take no notice of the matter. Such parents are not innocent. They stand guilty before God. Eli was, probably, not an eye-witness of his sons' immoralities; but he was not ignorant of them; for, as we are informed, "he was told of all that his sons did, but he restrained them not;" and hence the curse came. And as we have seen, most terrible was the curse. Let all parents take warning!

Profane swearing is, I am sorry to say it, a vice but too common in our land, and in our day. Go into any



tavern or hotel; travel in any stage, steamboat, or railroad-car, and if you do not hear the language of profaneness, you are more favored than I have been. It is common, I believe, everywhere. In the city, in the country; on the land, and on the wave. And what is surprising, it is not confined to the lowest orders of society, but it is common even amongst those who are esteemed respectable and genteel. And what is still more remarkable, even persons of literary taste are sometimes found profane. They will use phrases which have no beauty, and which no grammarian on earth can parse; and these abominable phrases they will repeat more than one hundred times in a day! If this be not the bubbling up of sheer depravity, what is it? And, strange to say, some persons who hold to the doctrine of universal salvation, nevertheless, will say, over and over again, that they will be damned, and will even swear to it! This sin, my brethren, of profane swearing, I consider peculiarly impious and daring; for it is so expressly forbidden; and, of all others, it has the least excuse, for it has no reward—no temptation. Does it add to a man's wealth? It does not. Does it make him more happy? It does not. Does it make him more influential or beloved? It does not. Does it, in any manner, raise him in the estimation of others? It does not. In the view of the wisest and the best, it lowers him; it makes him vile; for it is well known that the most unprincipled and abandoned, the vilest of the vile, are usually the most profane. Who ever heard of a pirate that did not swear? of a liar that did not swear? of a gambler that did not swear? Now,

if the most wicked and most vile are, of all others, the most profane, certainly, just so far as a man resembles them, he makes himself vile. Parents, remember this! Can you be indifferent to a matter of this kind? Religion apart, if you have a regard for your own standing, or the respectability of your children, do not lose sight of this matter. If your children are becoming profane, they are becoming wicked and vile. Ah me! when a child swears, methinks all heaven grieves! God Almighty frowns! guardian angels blush! and the Recording Spirit sighs as he writes it down in the records of eternity! What, then, must parents do in such a case? Do you ask? The case is clear: let them assert their authority; let them restrain those committed to their charge.

IV. Parents should, moreover, restrain their children from keeping bad company. The Bible says, and says correctly, "Evil communications corrupt good manners:" and a certain old writer makes this remark, quaint, but true: "They who go much into bad company, are like those who go much into the sun—they soon get tanned." Firm indeed must be that heart which can withstand continual temptations; and strong those principles which can resist perpetual assaults—"attrition wears the solid rock." Even men, ripe in age and experience, have been seriously injured by too intimately associating with improper characters; and what then can be expected from an inexperienced youth, or a tender child? Solomon knew well the danger of such associations, and therefore said, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy feet from their

path." That is, have nothing to do with them. It is better for a son or daughter to have no companions at all, than those who are vile and corrupting. Many an interesting young man, who once bid fair to be a comfort to his parents, and a useful and ornamental member of society, has been ruined by vile associates, and bad companions. Am I wrong? Perhaps some, even now present, are ready to say, "Sir, I had well nigh been ruined in this way. My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped! O, if it had not been for that sudden death, or that alarming providence, or that sore affliction, or that pious letter, or that awakening sermon, or that faithful friend, I would have been ruined by my evil associates! Blessed be God, who has not given over my soul as a prey to destruction! My soul is delivered as a bird out of the snare, of the fowler; the snare is broken, and I am escaped!" Parents, think well upon this subject! Guard the morals of your children; select their companions; see to it, that these companions be the gentle and the good, and not the vicious and the vile. If they prefer the latter talk kindly to them, reason the matter well; but, if they persist, remember the case of Eli, and restrain them.

V. Parents should restrain their children from the sin of Sabbath-breaking. The fourth commandment, which says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is one of the most important in the whole decalogue; and I fully accord with the sentiment expressed in these words, "No Sabbath, no religion." The Sabbath, like the rite of marriage, was an institution of paradise. And most truly did our Saviour say, "The Sabbath was made for

man"—designed to be a blessing to the human race—a benefit to man's physical and moral nature, as well as a blessing to him in a spiritual point of view. Relax the obligations of the Sabbath, and you open the floodgates of vice; abolish the Sabbath, and you ruin the world! See France, when the Sabbath was abolished!—then began "the reign of terror." Sir Matthew Hale states, that nearly all of those upon whom he was called to pass sentence of death, confessed that their course of depravity and crime commenced in breaking the holy Sabbath! and of twelve hundred and thirty-two convicts in the State prison of New York, it seems, that only twenty-six had been taught to reverence that sacred day! These things speak volumes. Parents! teach your children, both by precept and example, to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Permit them not to wander about, as little Arabs, on that holy day; permit them not to engage in their usual sports and pastimes; send them to the Sabbath-school; place in their hands interesting books suited to the day; teach them their catechisms; tell them "Bible stories;" talk to them about Joseph, about Samuel, about Daniel, and the three children; talk to them about the blessed Saviour, and the martyrs; about heaven, and certain good children who have gone to that happy world; furnish yourself with matter; lay yourself out to give Sabbath day instruction; let everything be pleasant and inviting; let the Lord's day, so to speak, be wreathed with flowers; let it be made to your children a delight, the "sweetest of all the seven." If, however, your children are disposed to wander about on



the Sabbath, and get into improper company, and engage in improper sports, remember the case of Abraham, who maintained his authority, and the case of Eli, who did not; remember the blessing which came upon the one, and the curse which came upon the other, and neglect not parental duty!

I might also say something on the subject of frequenting taverns, using ardent spirits, attending horse-races, and theatres, and dancing parties; and also about novel-reading, and many other things, but the time would fail. Permit me to say, that parents should, as far as possible, restrain their children from everything calculated to have a corrupting or evil influence upon them, in any way; for, is not the parent the Heaven-appointed guardian of the child? and if the parent does not watch over the child, who will? But this suggests the propriety of adding a few remarks, by way of stirring up parents to a more faithful and diligent discharge of the important duties which devolve upon them.

I. Parents, remember, your children are jewels—living jewels! They bear the stamp of immortality. They will outlive the splendors of the sun, and all the stars which decorate the broad arch of heaven! They must live forever; and that either in happiness or in misery—either as angels of light, or spirits damned! and to you, more than to any other persons in the world, is committed the power and the duty of forming the character of the child. And hence to the parent it is said, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.” You are the pilot that must

direct the course ; you are the guide that must mark out the right path. Early impressions, we all know, are the most enduring ; and, in the providence of God, it is so arranged, that whether you desire it or not, the earliest impressions are received from you. O the immense responsibility of the parent ! It is enough to make the best man tremble !—at any rate it is enough to drive every parent to the throne of the heavenly grace, to seek wisdom there. And O how unhappy, how pitiable is the case of those children whose parents, so far from restraining them from wicked ways, do not restrain themselves ! It is the duty of all parents to “ lure to brighter worlds, and lead the way.” But when the influence of the parent is the reverse of this, surely it is enough to make angels weep. Many children who were blessed with good and pious parents, will, we verily believe, rise up and call their parents blessed, in the resurrection morn. O ye parents, who neglect parental duty, what will your children say of you in the great judgment-day ? But this leads to another remark.

2. Parents ! are you aware of your responsibility ? Have you ever seriously thought how much depends upon you ? Have you discharged your duty to your children ? Have you done your best to form their manners, and to give their characters a noble and heavenly stamp ? Have you done what you could to make them virtuous in life, happy in death, and happy forever ? If your son is profligate, have you nothing to reproach yourself with ? Suppose you were now upon a dying bed, would you have the consolation of believing that you

had done everything you could do to promote the best interests of your children for time and for eternity? Eli's sons were cut down in the midst of their sins; and you know how melancholy was his own end. Should your children, or any one of them, be taken away unprepared, would there be no remorse waked up in your bosom? Are you quite sure that there would be no occasion for anything like self-reproach? In a meeting for serious inquirers, held in a certain place, there was one under most pungent conviction. He was overwhelmed; he was almost convulsed with agony! He was a father, who had just come from the grave of his son, a young man, who had died, it seems, without hope. The unhappy old man then remembered his fault, his dreadful guilt, in neglecting parental duty. He had neither by precept nor example been a blessing to his son—and now that son was gone forever! O ye parents, who have not been faithful to your trust, could you have seen this unhappy father weeping bitterly over his neglect of parental duty, methinks it would have had the power of a thousand arguments to rouse you to the importance of attending, with all diligence and fidelity, to those immortal ones whom Heaven has committed to your charge!

3. One remark more, and I have done. Parents, your own happiness is concerned in this matter! "A wise son," says Solomon, "maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." It is a remarkable fact, that children who are properly controlled in early life, retain a respect and affection for their parents as long as they live; but those who have been foolishly indulged

and permitted in everything to have their own way ; those, in other words, whose training has been neglected, and who have not in early life been brought under proper control ; those I have noticed, are wont to be very deficient both in respect and affection. I have seen cases of this kind, so marked, that it seemed as if the judgments of heaven had commenced falling upon unfaithful parents even in this life ; and the words of our text seemed to tingle upon the ear : “ I have told him that I will judge his house forever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.” Parents, do your duty in the fear of God, and your children will be a comfort to you. O how happy the parent whose children turn out well ! The mother’s heart thrills with joy whilst, like the mother of the Gracchii, she pronounces them her jewels ; and the fond father, too, with a glad heart, delights to call them his, whilst he realizes the blessedness of that man, whose “ wife is as a fruitful vine by the side of his house, and his children like olive plants round about his table.” God bless every parent here ! and may none have the weakness, nor share the sorrows of the unhappy Eli !



## SERMON VI.

### PROVE YOUR OWN WORK.

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.—GALATIANS. vi. 4.

In these words we have an important precept, enforced by a very powerful consideration. The precept is expressed in these words: "Let every man prove his own work." By a man's own work, we are to understand, not merely his actions, and general conduct, but his thoughts, his motives, his sentiments, and everything, indeed, which has an influence on the forming of his moral and religious character. These things he is to prove: that is, to test; to see if they are of the right stamp; to see if they will answer in a dying hour; to see if they will stand the scrutiny of the last great day.

At first view, we see that the precept is an important one. But this is not enough. It is exceedingly important. To prove this, permit me to remark—First: Self-deception is very common, and this arises from several sources. In the first place, the springs of action lie very deep. A man may suppose himself influenced by one set of motives, when, really, he is influenced by another set of motives altogether! This rich man, for example gives himself great credit for his numerous and splendid charities. He really thinks they flow from motives of pure benevolence, when, perchance, if traced to their source, it will be found that these acts of charity originate

in secret vanity, or love of human applause. See that youthful soldier! At the call of his country, he buckles on his armor, faces the wintry blast, and rushes through clouds of dust, and seas of blood! He firmly believes that he is a patriot, when, really true patriotism, it may be, has very little to do in this matter. Ambition is the ruling passion in his bosom! He pants for distinction! He longs to twine the laurels of fame around his brow! "Come and see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts," said Jehu, when he was cutting down the enemies of the Lord. What made him so zealous on this occasion? It so happened, that in cutting down the enemies of the Lord, he was establishing his own dynasty! Ah! my brethren, the heart is deceitful above all things; and the springs of action lie very deep. This is one great source of self-deception. Another is this—the power of self-love. Charity, or love, the Scriptures tell us, covereth a multitude of sins: that is, hides them from the view. See that over-fond and doting mother!—(Mistake me not—if there is a class of persons upon earth for whom I have a peculiarly profound respect, it is for mothers; and I can with all my heart say, Heaven bless mothers, all the world over! but I have reference now to a certain description of mothers, concerning whom it may be said, alas! that there are such!)—See that doting mother, I say—she has one only child—one darling boy. She thinks he is the perfection of all excellence—the best child in all the land—and she is telling its smart sayings, and speaking its praises to every neighbor that steps in. She thinks, she really believes, this child to be the best in all the land.

Everybody else sees plainly that it is a spoiled piece!—Why? It will disobey its mother; it is peevish, and fretful; is rude even in the presence of company. It is positively a bad child; and yet the mother thinks it is wonderfully smart and good—none like it in all the town! How are we to account for this? Charity covers a multitude of sins. The mother's overweening fondness for her child hides from her view all its faults, and therefore she comes to a wrong conclusion concerning the true character of that child. Just so in the case before us. Loving ourselves, as we are too apt to do, with an inordinate love, we are wont to look more frequently upon the bright, than the dark side of our character. This being the case, what are we to expect, but that we shall think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think! The power of self-love! Yes, this has deceived many.

There are other sources of self-deception; but I proceed to make a second remark, which is this:—Self-deception is very dangerous. It serves to keep a person quiet, when, if he were only aware of his true character and condition, he would be in a state of great alarm and anxiety. If I have taken up the idea that I am no sinner, what motive have I to repent? If I have come to the conclusion that I am on the safe side, why should I desire to change sides? If I lay my soul to the flattering unction that I have a very good heart, why should I pray that God would give me a new heart? Thus, we see the evil and danger of self-deception; keeping us quiet at the very moment when, perhaps, we have reason to cry out, with the Philippian jailor, "O sirs! what must I do to be

saved?" But this is not all. Self-deception leads to the ruin of many. What says the Saviour?—Many shall come unto me in that day, and say, Lord! Lord! and I will profess unto them—Depart! I never knew you! Who are these? Miserable self-deceivers, who, neglecting to prove their own work, knew nothing of their true condition until the light of eternity broke the power of all delusion! O, how awful, for a person to go down to the grave with "a lie in his right hand!" and what time he smiles of angels, and the plaudits of the blessed Redeemer, to hear the thunders of wrath, and the wailings of the lost! And yet we have too much reason to fear that this will be the case with many. I think I can mention the case of one, at least, who evidently left the world under the power of self-deception—Jean Jacques Rousseau. When near his end, he had no anxiety in relation to his future state, but turning to one, (I think not his wife,) remarked: "My dear, how happy for one to die who has nothing to reproach himself with! I will go to the bar, and say, 'Great God, here is Jean Jacques Rousseau! and a better man never lived!'"—Now, did not this very man write two octavo volumes, (his own life,) in which he confesses he did many things most shameful, and which I would not mention, lest the very mention thereof should crimson the cheek of modesty? Yet, forgetting all these things, he bases all his hopes of heaven upon the purity of his moral character! Most assuredly he was a miserable self-deceiver! He had not proved his own work, and, so far as we can see, it proved the ruin of his soul. But I can mention another case,



more startling still. I know a female who died shouting; and yet there was awful reason to fear that she never entered the heavenly world. I will state the case, and you can form your own conclusion. She had neglected the care of her soul, it seems, all her life long; when near her end, mark! without any conviction of sin, (so far as I could perceive) or need of a Saviour, she got her imagination wrought upon about "the golden streets of the new Jerusalem; and whilst this brilliant image was before her mind she was thrown into a rapture, and left the world in what was called great triumph. Surely this must have been a case of self-deception; for how can a person be a penitent without having some conviction of sin? or how can a person embrace a Saviour without feeling any need of him? Ah! surely, it was Apollyon, coming up out of the smoke of Tophet, and saying, Peace! peace! when there is no peace. Hush! hush! when death and destruction are at the door! "No marvel," says Peter, "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." O, how important, when such mighty interests are at stake, to dig deep, and lay a good foundation! In other words, how important, how exceedingly important it is for every man to prove his own work!

There is no such thing as rectifying mistakes in eternity. When death's leaden sceptre is laid upon the cold bosom, the decree of an immutable God rolls over the shrouded form—"He that is filthy, let him be filthy still! and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still!" In view of these things I now ask, is not the precept in our text one of exceeding great importance? If I mis-

take not, the best in this assembly are ready promptly to exclaim, "It is! it is!"—for I have noticed that those whose piety is the least questionable, are the very ones who are most disposed to exercise a godly jealousy over their own hearts; knowing that, of a truth, the human heart by nature "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." But, deceitful as the heart of man unquestionably is, there is nevertheless, such a thing as knowing our true state and condition. Yes, there is such a thing as being able to say with the man of Uz, "I know that my Redeemer liveth"—and with the apostle Paul, "We know, that if the earthly house of this our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Certainly, every man may prove his own work—may test his own character, or we should not find recorded the precept in our text. Aye, and I will go further, and say, if we are truly converted, we must have spiritual evidence of it, and that too—mark! whether we have lights or shadows—joy or sorrow! Do you doubt this? See that dear little girl! she loves her mother; she follows her mother, as if she were her shadow. She cannot be happy when her mother is gone. See her now, almost dancing for joy, whilst standing near her mother's lap. How her eyes sparkle! Her face is dressed in smiles! "What makes you so happy, little child?" "O," says she, "Mother loves me; she talks so good to me!"—You don't question her love for her mother. Change the case: That little daughter has done something to displease its mother. Its mother is displeased, and looks sad. "Ma,

what is the matter?" says the child. "Why, my daughter," replies the mother, "you have been a naughty child, and your mother can't love you until you are sorry for what you have done." See the little creature! she bursts into a flood of tears, and rushing into another room, she cries, fit to break her little heart! Some one comes by and says, "Are you sick?" She is not disposed to talk. Another asks, "What is the matter, my little dear? What makes you cry so?" "O!" exclaims she, "Mother don't love me! Mother don't love me!"—Now, I ask, does not this child give as convincing proof of real affection for her mother, as when she was dancing around her mother's lap, because her mother was smiling upon her? As this child, then, has a way of making known her affection for her mother, whether her mother smile or frown, even so, has piety a way of making itself known, whether there be lights or shadows, joy or sorrow. Take the case of Job, for example. On one occasion the candle of the Lord shines upon him, and in the joy and exultation of his soul he exclaims, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" At another time he is under a cloud; and what is his language now? "O, that I knew where I might find him!—Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Is not his piety just as evident in the latter as in the former case?

Take another example:—The Psalmist, in a moment when everything is bright and clear, uses this language of confidence and triumph: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory." You have no doubt of his piety now. But a cloud has passed

over the Psalmist; he is in great darkness; mark his language now! "Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favorable no more? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why are thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him." Surely nothing can be more evidential of true piety than this. These things being so, I take this position, that if a person is truly converted, truly a child of God, he must and will have scriptural evidence of it, whether he have lights or shadows, whether he have joy or sorrow. Hence, the precept in our text is applicable to all, and in all circumstances: "Let every man prove his own work." And now, my brethren, if you wish to deal faithfully with your own souls; if you desire to know your true character and condition; in other words, if you wish to make sure work for eternity, there are three things which you must do: You must consider, you must examine, and you must compare.

1. You must consider.—"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways." There are many persons who do not, will not spend one single thought upon the subject of their soul's salvation! They can think about their riches, their honors, their pleasures; they can think about this and that scheme of gain and aggrandizement; indeed, they can think about anything and everything, except that which should engage their earliest and most serious attention—the salvation of their undying souls! Such persons may be said to live a dreaming life! and no wonder if such palm a fatal deception upon themselves, and go down to the grave with a "lie in their right hand."



My brethren, you must think about your spiritual state; you must frequently ask, what are your hopes for eternity? This is necessary to rouse the soul to life and activity. It is requisite as a preparation for something more. I hold, that the mind, to be excited, must have the exciting object before it. How can beauty charm, if it be not looked upon? How can music please, if it be not attended to? How can there be the feeling of an object, when there is no contact? Ordinarily, the mind operates through its appropriate organ. If it wants to see, it directs the eye; if it wants to hear, it turns the ear; if it wants to feel, it extends the hand. Even so, the understanding is the eye of the mind; and, in order that the mind may be duly roused, the exciting object should be brought before the understanding, the eye of the mind, and then there is a setting in motion the will, the affections, and all the powers of the soul. Do I deny the doctrine of Divine influences? God forbid! It forms an essential part of the "faith once delivered to the saints;" but the Spirit operates in accordance with the moral and physical nature of man. How was the Psalmist converted? By the Spirit of God, unquestionably. But the manner, the mode, the way and means? By serious thought. Hear what he says—"I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies." He was once an impenitent sinner, careless and secure in his sins. He was going to an eternal world under the power of an awful deception. But his character is changed. Mark the process!—"I thought upon my ways." He first began to inquire whether he was living as he ought to

live; whether he was walking in the right path—the path to heaven. Under the operation of serious thought, he was led to see that all was not right; that he was in a dangerous way; that he was not going to heaven, but to hell! What was the consequence? There was an end to his carnal security. Anxiety was waked up in his bosom and a determination to act: “I turned my feet to thy testimonies.” Aye, and there was promptness of action: “I made haste to keep thy commandments.” Peter denied his Master, and for a season was quiet, and without any self-reproach. But we are told that “when he thought thereon, he wept.” When Hazael came to the prophet, the man of God, it is said, fixed his eyes upon him, until he (the man of God) wept. The future crimes of Hazael were brought before the prophetic eye of the prophet, and his very soul was moved within him. The man of God could not restrain his tears—he wept. In the first chapter of Isaiah, God brings this charge against the children of Israel—“I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me:—The ox knoweth its owner, and the ass his master’s crib, but Israel doth not know.” And why? The answer is given—“My people doth not consider.” Thus it appears that there is much power in serious thought. If, then, a man would thoroughly prove his own work, he must, as a preliminary step, consider his ways—his moral conduct, his present state, his future prospects. He must seriously consider whither he is going, and whether the way in which he is now going will land him in happiness, or in misery; in heaven or in hell. But,

2. You must examine.—Serious consideration is not enough. There must, also be a close and prayerful examination. If a merchant wishes to know precisely how he stands, he must not only think about his affairs, but he must also enter upon the work of careful examination. He must turn over the leaves of his day-book and ledger; he must look into his strong box and drawer; he must find out what he owes to others and what others owe to him. Then, and not until then, can he know precisely how his business and pecuniary matters stand. Just so in relation to the case in hand. If a man desires to know his true state and condition, he must go beyond the matter of serious thought. He must enter, in good earnest, upon the work of self-examination. In the light of divine truth, he must examine, not merely his outward conduct and actions, but also the state of his heart and affections. He must examine his thoughts; for as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. He must examine his motives and his sentiments, and, in short, everything which exerts an influence in the formation of his moral and religious character. With regard to a man's motive—this is an important matter; for oftentimes the motive stamps the character of the action. Should a person do you a kindness, you would be thankful; but suppose it should be ascertained that in doing you this kindness, he never intended it, but, contrarywise, intended to do you a serious and lasting injury; when aware of his motive, there will be, if I mistake not a very great abatement in your sense of obligation to him. Now, if motive is something with man, who looks upon the outward appearance, shall it not be something with

God, who looks upon the heart? Yes, motive is something: and many an action which appears fair and commendable in the eyes of men, is naught—of no value, and even odious in the sight of God, being vitiated by the motive. If, for example, we perform an action, good in itself, but perform it simply to please ourselves, or to gain human applause, without any promptings of a desire to honor or please God, certainly there is no real virtue in this. Hence the apostle says: “Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” O how does this principle wither many things, fair and beautiful in the eyes of men! How it reduces to dust and ashes many things deemed vastly meritorious, and even deserving of heaven! Examine your motives, then. Are they pure? Are they such as God will approve of? Again, you must examine your sentiments. Do they square with God’s blessed word? “No matter what a man’s sentiments are,” says one, “if his actions are right.” Is this correct? Then the believer and the unbeliever may be put upon the same level; and our Saviour uttered strange language when he said—“He that believeth on the Son, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” No matter what a man believes!—let us try the principle. Here are two persons, who, outwardly, treat you in a manner equally respectful, but their opinions of you are widely different. One believes you to be a good man; the other believes you to be corrupt. Is sentiment nothing here? Sentiment is something; and, in relation to



religious matters, the Bible is the great standard of correct sentiment:

“The judge which ends the strife,  
Where wit and reason fail.”

Now, there are persons who, because they are not profligate or profane, because they are moral men, in the common acceptation of the term, think they are in a safe state—that they have no need of conversion, and that, because they have been men of fair moral character, they are fair candidates for heaven—aye, think that they certainly will be saved! Has such a man proved his own work? Does this sentiment of his fall in with the declarations of the sacred volume? Does it fall in with the scriptural saying, “Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that sinneth?” Or with this—“Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them?” Or with this—“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?” Or with this—“Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ?” Or with this—“Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God?” My hearers, take care! Palm no deception upon yourselves. Remember, all the declarations of this volume are true, divinely true, and must stand for ever, as it is written, “For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.” Beware how you trust to your own sentiments when they are not in accordance with the word of God. Most assuredly it will bring perdition upon your soul! O, be entreated to bring your sentiments to this great test

of truth, the Bible! Let every man dig deep and lay a good foundation. "Let every man prove his own work."

3. You must compare.—Some persons are ready enough in their comparisons, but they happen not to be of the right kind! Some compare themselves with certain professors of religion; and, because they are better, (as they suppose,) than those professors of religion, whom they are wont to call "hypocrites," they fancy that they are very good. But may not a man be better than a "hypocrite," and not be a very good man after all? Some compare themselves with the majority of mankind; and because they, as they think, are better than the majority of mankind, conclude that they are in a safe state; but would not this have been a very unsafe test in the days of Noah? and how know they but it may be an unsafe test at the present time? These comparisons are not of the right kind. Permit me to show you "a more excellent way."

First: You must compare yourselves with the characters pronounced blessed by the Saviour, in his sermon upon the mount. Take this example: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Has your pride been humbled? Are you sensible of your emptiness and poverty, and do you feel your need of a better righteousness than your own? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Again: "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." Do you mourn after a godly sort? Do you mourn that you have sinned against a good and gracious God? and do you mourn after your own hard heart?

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." But take another example: "Blessed are the meek." Have you the meekness and gentleness of Christ? Can you bear injuries? Can you forgive your enemies? Has there been, in such matters, a radical change in the temper and disposition of your soul? Has the lion in you been converted into a lamb? the vulture into a dove? "Blessed are the meek. Once more: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you breathe after holiness? Do you sincerely and earnestly desire to be delivered from the least and last remains of sin? Is there a peculiar sweetness and charm in heaven, as a place of perfect moral purity, where you shall not have one wicked thought, nor one unhallowed feeling, nor one improper desire, nor utter one sinful word, through all eternity? Can you enter fully into the feelings of the poet, when he says,

"O glorious hour! O, blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God;  
And flesh and sin no more control  
The sacred pleasures of the soul."

And are these lines delightful and refreshing to your heart?

"There shall we see his face,  
And never, never sin;  
There, from the rivers of his grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in."

If these beatitudes suit you, then doubtless you are the children of God. The Saviour does not mention names; he does what is much better, he describes characters, and with these characters he connects the blessing. If, then, the character is yours, the blessing, of course, is yours also. But

Secondly : You are to compare yourselves with those known to have been truly pious. Here is a principle, or matter of fact, which must never be forgotten—that true piety is substantially the same in every age, and in every bosom. As face answers to face in water, so does the heart of man to man. In all great points, in all essential matters, the experience of one pious soul is substantially the experience of another. Bring in the rich man and the poor man, the learned and the unlearned, the stripling and the man of age; bring in the Methodist and the Presbyterian, the Baptist and Episcopalian: in short, bring in persons representing the different ranks and classes of society, and the different denominations, too; and, I may add, let them come from the different quarters of the globe; let each be soundly converted; let them have one common language, and let them converse freely on the subject of Christian experience, and it will be found, that in all leading matters of experimental religion, there is scarcely a shade of difference between them! Yes, they are all brought into the same school; they all have the same teacher; they all learn the same lessons—so teaches the Bible, as it is written in Isaiah liv. 13: “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children.” It is true, some are, so to speak,



more apt scholars—are better taught than others—but, I repeat it, all are brought into the same school; all have the same teacher; and all learn the same lessons! These things being so, if we would prove our own work; if we would desire to know whether we have the root of the matter in us: in other words, if we wish to know whether we have the root of the matter in us: in other words, if we wish to know whether we are really the children of God or not, we must, as we have said, compare ourselves with those known to be the children of God. To illustrate what I mean, I will suppose that you are anxious about your soul; you have had some mental distress, and some comfort, but your evidence of being a child of God is not clear; you wish to prove your own work, or religious character. This being the case, I will place you in certain circumstances, in which you are to complain yourself with those known to be pious, in similar circumstances, and if there be an agreement, if they have true piety, so have you!

First—I will suppose that you are in circumstances of deep affliction. Was not Job a child of God? and was he not deeply afflicted? And now, what was his spirit? what the exercises of his mind? what the breathings of his soul? They are recorded and distinctly marked. Observe—when one wave of affliction after another had passed over him, and he was ready to sink in deep waters, one said unto him, “Curse God and die.” And what said he? “Have we received good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be

the name of the Lord. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Is this your spirit? Can you truly adopt this language? Then, if Job was pious, so are you; if eternal life be his reward, you shall possess the same; for piety is the same in every age and in every bosom.

Again: I will suppose that you are thinking upon the words of the Saviour: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." You have had some sorrow of heart on account of your sins; you have shed some tears, you have heaved some sighs, but you are not entirely satisfied that you are a true penitent—do you ask what is to be done? I answer—find out some one known to have been a true penitent; find out what were the exercises of his mind; compare yours with his, and if they correspond, then, if he was a penitent, so are you. David was certainly a true penitent: but where shall we find the penitential exercises of the Psalmist recorded? In the fifty-first Psalm. Let us turn to that Psalm, and from the language of his lips, we may learn the breathings of his soul. What are his words? "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Create within me a clean heart, and renew within me a right spirit. Cast me, not away from thy presence, and take not thine Holy

Spirit from me." Now, say you read the whole Psalm; you here recognize, substantially, the exercises of your own mind. You are astonished that one who lived under another dispensation, and at a period so remote, should have had thoughts and feelings, emotions and desires, so exactly corresponding with your own! Is this so? Then the case is clear: if David was a penitent, so are you; if eternal life be his reward, you shall possess the same; for "piety is the same in every age, and in every bosom." "Let every man prove his own work."

Again: Touching the matter of faith—I will suppose that you have been meditating upon these words, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." You have some hope that you do exercise faith in Christ, but you have heard so much about historical faith, and speculative faith, and saving faith, and living faith, and dead faith, you are bewildered; you know not whether you have the right kind of faith—that which really and truly unites the soul to Christ, and which has the promise of life everlasting. Do you again ask, What is to be done! I answer, as in the former case: find one known to have been a true believer; find out what his views and feelings were, in relation to our blessed Saviour, and if yours correspond with his, then it may be known to you whether you are a true believer or not. But where shall we find one known to have been a true believer? Peter was one. Did he ever express his views and feelings in relation to Christ? He did, and on a very important occasion. Our Saviour had taught certain things which gave offence; and as we are told, many

of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. And Jesus turned to the twelve and said, "Will ye also go away?" And Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee? for thou hast the words of eternal life." As if he had said: Lord Jesus, thou art our only hope—I for one must cling to thee! I am a poor, lost sinner, I cannot save myself. Thou art my only, only hope! Is this your language? Is this the very feeling of your soul? Then your case is clear. If Peter was a believer, so are you! If eternal life be his reward, you shall possess the same; for piety is the same in every age and in every bosom. "Let every man prove his own work."

Again: We will suppose that you are thinking on the subject of the Divine government. You wish to know whether your views and feelings in relation to this matter are of the right kind; whether they are such as indicate true piety. What is to be done? Adopt the same plan already suggested. Find one known to have true piety; find out the breathings of his heart on this subject, compare yours with his, and then you may know whether you belong to the number of the people of God or not. Take the case of Isaiah. No man questions his piety. What does he say? "Say unto Zion, thy God reigneth." This is the language of joy and gratulation—the language of one pleased with the thought that God is upon the throne, and who wishes the tidings thereof to be carried, to be spread on every hand. David was also a child of God, and what does he say? "The Lord reigneth! let the earth rejoice! The Lord reigneth, let the multitude



of the isles be glad thereof." And again: "The Lord shall reign forever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations: Praise ye the Lord!"

But there is a case, if possible, more in point still. It is that of those who are around the throne in heaven. "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and all ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard," says John, "as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Allelulia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Rev. xix. 6. Now, is all this in harmony with your feelings and desires? Do you rejoice in the government of God—in his supreme, universal, and everlasting dominion? Is the language, "the Lord reigneth," pleasant to your ear? Does the loud and harmonious shout of the heavenly world, "Allelulia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" start the glad response in your soul—Amen! Allelulia! If these things are so, you need no audible voice, coming from heaven, to assure you that you are a child of God; you need no angel to come down from the skies, to assure you that your name is written in the book of life. You have the evidence in your own bosom—having the spirit and stamp of the people of God. This being clear, then everything else is clear: and I hesitate not to say, that you are a child of God—that you have "a good hope through grace." Aye, and it is your privilege, even now, to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This is taught in our text—"Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another,"

We have explained the *precept*, we would now lay before you,

II. *The motive*.—It is expressed in the words just repeated—"Then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another:"—that is, he shall have independent joy. His consolations shall not flow from anything around him, but shall be within him, as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The happiness of unconverted man depends, very much, upon outward circumstances. When the world smiles upon them, and they have temporal prosperity, they may have something like pleasure playing around the heart; but when the world frowns, and adversity comes, then their springs of comfort are cut off, and they are ready to say, with Micah—"Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I beside?" See Cardinal Wolsey! While basking in the sunshine of royal favor, he seemed to be a happy man. He lived in splendor; he revelled in a palace; noblemen were his attendants; and, like Solomon of old, he had access to every source of worldly enjoyment. But, when reverses came, when Henry VIII. put him out of office, and the nobles of the court turned their backs upon him, he became a wretched man, and, it is said, died of a broken heart. He was no Christian—he had no springs of consolation within him; he had no source of rejoicing in his own bosom: no gracious affections in exercise; no cheering hopes of heavenly bliss. He had nothing to sustain him; and literally, his grey hairs went down with sorrow to the grave. How different is it with the truly pious man! His chief sources of enjoyment are within—

deeply seated in his own soul. See, for example, Paul and Silas at Phillippi. They are shamefully treated. By order of the magistrates they are beaten; they are thrust into the inner prison; their feet are made fast in the stocks; the whole world is frowning upon them; and one would suppose that they can have no source of comfort whatever. Surely, they are the most wretched persons in Phillippi! It is a mistake. They are the happiest—the very happiest! They are too happy to sleep! for, we are told, that “at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God.” It is written—“Is any merry? Let him sing psalms.” At a midnight hour, Paul and Silas gave this proof of joyfulness, even in a dungeon! Whilst others are wrapped in slumber, Paul and Silas are singing—their inward consolations are so great! Yes, this, and not sorrow, drives away sleep from their eyes, and slumber from their eyelids. They are happy! they are joyful! They forget that the gloom of the inner prison is around them. Celestial radiance is beaming indirect upon their souls! They forget that their feet are made fast in the stocks; they seem to be walking in a large place! Their backs, also, are lacerated with stripes; but this, too, is forgotten—their souls are not lacerated; their souls are happy! In the midst of all their worldly tribulations, they have inward comfort. The full tide of heavenly consolation is flowing into every chamber of their souls! I repeat it, they are happy—the happiest men in Phillippi; yea, the happiest men in Phillippi! How can this be accounted for? Our text explains the whole matter. “They have proved their own work; they have full evi-

dence that they are the children of God; that God loves them; and that soon their "weary feet shall reach the peaceful inn of lasting rest." Yes, in their bosom they have the blest assurance, that only a little while, and they will have shed their last tear! will have heaved their last sigh! will have felt their last pang! Only a little while, and they will be with God and his angels! Only a little while and they will be looking their Redeemer in the face with joy! Only a little while, and they will be bathing in glory, as in the sunlight of heaven! How beautifully and strongly does this illustrate our text—"Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

But have we not seen examples before our own eyes? Have we not seen the children of God wonderfully sustained in the hour of trouble? Have we not seen them happy, exceedingly happy, in the time of their deepest affliction? Yes, when everything of a temporal nature seemed to be against them, they have been enabled to say with the prophet, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine: the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation." Thank God, for that religion which can sustain us in the day of severest trial, and give us rich consolation amid scenes of deepest worldly sorrow! Which can lighten the heaviest burden, and sweeten the bitterest cup, and brighten the darkest scene; yea, which in the hour of deepest afflic-



tion, can give us "a young heaven begun below and glory in the bud!" "The people here will say," said the late venerated Moses Hoge, when dying in Philadelphia, away from his home, "the people here will say, 'Poor old man!' Why," exclaimed he, "I am the happiest man in Philadelphia!" "My dear sister," said I to a beloved member of my church, who was near her end, "my dear sister, how do you find yourself this morning?" Grasping my hand, with much emotion, she replied, "My dear pastor, I am in pain, in great pain; but O," continued she, "I am happy! I am happy! O, I am so happy!

"Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are!"

O, let me but have grace to prove my own work, let me only have clear, scriptural evidence that I am a Christian, a real Christian, a true child of God, and I am free to say, for one, I can be happy on a bed of straw, on a bed of affliction! on the rack! on the wheel! bound to the stake! or amid the flames of martyrdom! If God be for us, who can be against us? Only think! one short night, and then everlasting day! One pang, and then, joy! joy! and joy for evermore! "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

## SERMON VIII.

## THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST AND THEIR DESIGN.

And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—MARK XV. 34.

NEVER, O never, my friends, was there a more awful hour than that in which these words were pronounced by the suffering Jesus! It was an hour of wrath, of awful vengeance, of mysterious darkness! It was the dread hour of atonement, when the high destinies of man were sealed with blood! Nature trembled, and stood aghast! Midnight veiled the earth and skies! The universe was wrapt in solemn silence, whilst the Eternal Father, bending from his awful throne, fixed his eyes on Calvary, and laid his hand heavy on the darling of his bosom! Oh! what a scene was there! The "Lord of glory," stripped of his splendors, surrounded by his enemies, and nailed to the accursed tree! His head is wounded with pricking thorns; his hands and his feet are pierced with rugged nails; his precious blood gushes forth, streams down, and smokes upon the mount! His soul is in anguish, and almost overwhelmed, he cries with a grievous and bitter cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani?—my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" O that sound! so strange, so awful, so mysterious! Methinks it rends the heavens! It reaches the courts of glory! Suddenly, the music of heaven dies away! Mute is the tongue of the seraph, silent the harps of the angelic

throng! All the heavenly ones gaze in astonishment upon the wondrous scene!

“Around the bloody tree  
They pressed, with strong desire  
That wondrous sight to see,  
The Lord of life expire!  
And could their eyes  
Have known a tear,  
Had dropped it there  
In sad surprise!”

My brethren, we would present no scene of human grandeur, but a scene far better calculated to touch the ingenuous heart. We would not rehearse the achievements of some mighty conqueror, who has desolated the earth, drenched its fields in blood, and grasped his laurels, reeking with human gore. No, we would rather take you by the hand, and lead you to Calvary, and there point out to you our blessed Saviour, suspended on the cross. O see! He suffers! It is in a cause worthy of a God. He dies! Garlands of victory grace his immortal brow; and the rising dead chant his triumphs before the eternal throne! But whither would we go? It is the suffering, not the triumphing Saviour, we are at this time called upon to contemplate. Lo! he hangs upon the tree! Wrapped in a vesture dipped in blood, he treads the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God. Now, the mandate goes forth from the throne of the Eternal King, “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord: smite the Shepherd!” And think, O my soul, the Shepherd was

smitten! The sword of divine vengeance pierced his very heart! and now, shrouded in darkness, and almost expiring, in agony he cries, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani?" which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" My brethren, here is a scene, a spectacle of a most extraordinary character! It is full of wonder and mystery, and is said to be pregnant with immense consequences. Nay, it is said to be the point upon which hangs the only hope of a ruined world! Let us take up the subject at this time, as if we never heard of it before. For this purpose, there are three inquiries which we would base upon our text:

I. Who is this sufferer?

II. What did he suffer? and

III. For whom, or what did he suffer?

I. Who is this sufferer?—His character is certainly unique; it is without precedent, without parallel! For example: the circumstances connected with his birth, show plainly that he is no ordinary personage. What says the Evangelist, Matthew? "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be



born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privately called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo! the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him; and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." And what says Luke? "There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around about them, and they were sore afraid, And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." "And suddenly there was

with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, good will toward men," Now, these things are wonderful. When did a star announce the birth, or angels sing the natal song of any other born into the world?

Again: The circumstances connected with the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple, show plainly that he is no common personage. Luke gives this account of the matter: "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou has prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." These things also are unprecedented. Who is this sufferer? The circumstances connected with his life show plainly also, that he was no ordinary personage. He spake as never man spake. His miracles were stupendous, and all miracles of kindness; and, on several occasions, miraculous attestations were given to his character, peculiar to himself. At his baptism, the Spirit, in a bodily form, as a dove, descended

and rested upon him; and an audible voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." On one occasion, an angel ministered to him in the desert; and on another, Moses and Elijah conversed with him on the mount. He asserted his dominion over all things; and, in proof thereof, he not only healed the sick, and raised the dead, and cast out devils; he not only opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped the ears of the deaf, and caused the lame man to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing; but he stilled the tempest, walked upon the waves of the sea, turned water into wine, and declared that he existed before Abraham; and that he was with the Father before the world was; and that he was Lord of the Sabbath; and that he had power to forgive sins; was the resurrection and the life; and would, finally, judge the world at the last day! Who is this sufferer?

The circumstances connected with his death also show that he is no common personage. It is true there were certain things of a humiliating character connected with his death; but these were closely linked with other things of a character entirely different. Did Judas betray him for thirty pieces of silver? He did; but afterwards he brought back to the priests the thirty pieces of silver; cast them down in the temple, and, in the agony of an accusing conscience, he went out and hanged himself. Did Peter deny him? He did; but a few hours afterwards he went out and wept bitterly. Did Herod, with his men of war, set him at naught and mock him, and array him in a gorgeous robe? He did, and yet was constrained to say

that he found no fault in him. Did Pilate condemn him? He did; but also, calling for water, he washed his hands, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this just man. Moreover, we are informed, that whilst Pilate was upon the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, and said, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have this day suffered many things in a dream, because of him." Was he crucified? He was; but there was darkness over all the land, from the sixth to the ninth hour! Did he finally bow his head, and give up the ghost? He did; but the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the rocks were rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

When he was laid in Joseph's sepulchre, it is true, he was under the power of death. Moreover, a great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre. The stone was sealed, and a guard was set; but on the morning of the third day, "behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." And, finally, he led his disciples "out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." These are all wonderful things, and we find nothing like them in connection with any other who ever appeared on earth. The question then returns, Who



is this sufferer? I answer—First: He is no mere man. I know it, for the Bible tells us that his goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting. This can be affirmed of no mere man; and therefore we know that he is no mere man. Nor can he be any mere angel. We know it, for the apostle expressly says, “He took not on him the nature of angels.” Who is this mysterious personage? He is no mere creature, however exalted. His works prove this; for, according to the Scriptures, “the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.” His names and titles prove the same thing; for, in the Bible, he is called, “God,” Heb. i. 8; “The mighty God,” Isa. ix. 6; “The Lord of glory,” Rev. i. 11; “Alpha and Omega,” “the Almighty,” and “God over all, blessed forever.” These names and titles can be applied to no mere creature, however exalted; and, therefore, Jesus Christ is no mere creature. In corroboration of this, notice this language of Paul, speaking of Christ: “He took upon him the form of a servant.” Now, the loftiest creatures are, in the very nature of the case, God’s servants; but if Christ took upon him the form of a servant, he must originally have possessed a nature above that of the loftiest creature, and therefore could not have been any mere creature, however exalted. But the question is still before us, Who is this sufferer? Isaiah tells us: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder. And his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace.” John tells us, (ch. i. 1,) “In the beginning

was the word; and the word was with God, and the word was God. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us; and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Indeed, the Saviour himself tells us, "I am the root and offspring of David." This is enough—we are now prepared to affirm that this blessed sufferer is very God, and very man: in other words, he has a two-fold nature—the divine and the human—in mysterious, yet all harmonious union. Do you stumble at the mystery? Paul did not; for, says he, "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." But it may be objected, Does not the sufferer, addressing the everlasting Father, say, "My God, my God?" I answer, he does. But if this disproves the supreme divinity of the Son, then when the Father, addressing the Son, calls him God, saying, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," (Heb. i. 8,) by a parity of reason, this disproves the supreme divinity of the Father, also. No, my brethren, the doctrine of the two-fold nature of Christ, though mysterious, is true. In relation to his divine nature, he was the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father; in reference to his human nature, he was a child born, a son given. As regards the divine nature, the Word was God; as regards the human nature, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. As to his divine nature, Christ was the "Root" of David—the source of David's being; as to his human nature, he was David's "offspring"—David's son. But if the doctrine of the two-fold nature of Christ be mysterious, it is true,

as we have said, and not only is it true, but needful. He must have a human nature, to obey the law, and a divine nature to give merit to that obedience. He must have a human nature to suffer, a divine nature to give efficacy to his sufferings. He must have a human nature to have a brother's heart; a divine nature to have an Almighty arm. O, my brethren, if the doctrine of the two-fold nature of Christ be mysterious, remember, it is both true and needful, and, I may add, precious! Paul evidently thought it so; hence this language, "We have not a high-priest, who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Yes, we know now who the sufferer is. His character is developed—his nature is made known. One distant, and yet near! One who unites in himself both the divine and human nature—all the glories of God, attuned with the milder beauties of a perfect man. Having given a scriptural answer to the first inquiry, we proceed to consider,

II. What did he suffer?—The sufferings of our Saviour were great, all the time he sojourned on earth; but we believe that his sufferings reached their climax when he uttered the cry in our text. Then it was that the storm of wrath which was hastening on to break down the pillars of the earth, and sweep its guilty millions into an everlasting hell, fell, in all its fury, upon this great sufferer! But, not to anticipate, we remark, First: That he suffered great loss. If some mighty earthly monarch should be stripped of his crown, and reduced to the condition of a plebeian subject; or if some rich man should

be deprived of all his possessions, and be reduced to the condition of a houseless and friendless beggar, you would certainly think he had sustained great loss. Now, think of Him, who once commanded the treasures of the universe, but on earth had no place where to lay his sacred head. According to the Scriptures, our blessed Saviour emptied himself—though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. One said, “Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” And what was his reply? “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.” And John mentions a circumstance, which, I confess, I had long overlooked: on a certain occasion, the Saviour taught the multitude; and when the evening came, “every man went into his own house;” but “Jesus went to the Mount of Olives!” Blessed Saviour! The poorest of his hearers had some house; but Jesus had none! So he went to the Mount of Olives! Ah, my brethren, it is even so—“Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor!” Yes, he suffered great loss. But,

Secondly: He suffered great indignity. If a true prophet should be treated as an impostor, or a lawful monarch as a plebian subject, you would say that an indignity had been done to him. Now remember that this sufferer is expressly called “the Lord of Glory.” He is, indeed and in truth, the Son of God, and only think of the treatment he met with on earth. He was the “Rose of Sharon,” but he was esteemed as a “a root out



of a dry ground." He was the chiefest among ten thousand, but he was considered as one "without form or comeliness." He was the "angel of the covenant," but he received not the honors of an angel. His own people shunned his embrace, as though he was some malignant fiend, whose touch was death, and whose breath was a lasting pestilence. But he was more than an angel. He was the "Lord of angels;" he was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" and when he gave proof of it, by the commanding evidence of the most stupendous miracles, his enemies raged against him more and more. Their malice and envy have kindled up a fire in their bosoms. They desire his death! They thirst for his blood! They long for the time to come when they shall feast their eyes with his streaming veins, and regale their ears with his dying groans! O see! an impious, ruffian band has invaded the retirement of our blessed Saviour! Their daring, sacriligious hands, have bound him fast!—Shall I proceed? Shall I rehearse what followed? It was enough to make an angel weep! It was enough to draw down thunderbolts of wrath! He is taken to the hall of Caiaphas; he is then hurried to Pilate's judgment-bar! He is next taken to Herod, who, with his men of war, set him at naught! They plait a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head, and, bowing the knee, they smite him upon the head! He is next sent back to Pilate—false witnesses rise up against him! None dare appear in his behalf. The hall, the court, the very heavens, ring with the cry, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Overawed by a raging multitude, Pilate gives

sentence against him. And now all seemed licensed to revile and insult God's only Son! He is blindfolded and smitten upon the cheek! An insulting voice is heard, saying, Prophecy, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee? They buffet him, they scourge him, they spit in his face! And now the cross is erected; the instruments of torture are prepared. The third hour is come. O dreadful hour! A deed is done at which all worlds recoil with horror. The bleseed Jesus is nailed to the cross—and that, too, between two malefactors, as though he were the chief malefactor. "The sun beheld the scene! No! the shocking scene drove back his chariot! midnight veiled his face!" O what a moment was that! But is not malice at length charmed into pity? Is not envy at last converted into love? No, no! His enemies triumph and exult. They revile, they rail, they wag their heads, and exclaim, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, come down from the cross, and we will believe! This is echoed back by the chief priests and Pharisees, who contemptuously cry out and say, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." And now,

"A solemn darkness veils the sky,

A sudden trembling shakes the ground."

But hark! a voice is heard: it comes from the suffering Jesus! Is it—Angels of my Father! crush these murderers dead? Vengeance of my God! blast them to an everlasting hell? O no! It is the language of the angel of mercy: of the divine and compassionate Saviour of the world. It is this; "Father forgive them, they know not

what they do." O, what a sufferer, and what indignities did he suffer! But,

Thirdly: Our Saviour suffered great mental anguish Whilst his bodily sufferings must have been very great, (as he had all the physical sensibilities of human nature,) we have reason to believe that his mental sufferings, or the sorrows of his soul, were infinitely greater. Hence, it is said, "He made his soul an offering for sin;" and again, "He poured out his soul unto death." See this blessed sufferer in the garden; what is his language?—"Now is my soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And again, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." This prayer he offered a second time; and even yet a third time his plaintive voice is heard uttering the same thing: O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." "And," says the Evangelist, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down upon the ground." What is this? As yet, no impious hand had smitten his cheek; no rugged nails had pierced his hands or feet; nor, as yet, had he been buffeted or scourged. Was it the anticipation of these things that overwhelmed him with sorrow? Was it the dread of such things which caused his prayer of agony and bloody sweat! Oh no! for on the cross he made no complaint of outward sufferings, He says not, O wicked soldiers! O cruel death! but—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is admitted that there is something mysterious in this mat-

ter. We cannot understand it now—we probably never will in this world. The main idea, however, seems to be this: The sinner was exposed to the frown of the Everlasting Father. Jesus Christ became the sinner's substitute; and, in some way or other, inexplicable to us, these frowns rested upon him. Whilst in the garden, and on the cross, the mandate went forth, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd! and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord!" Whilst in the garden and on the cross, he was made to tread the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God! Men did rail; devils did rage; hell did howl. All the billows of the pit, did, as it were, roll over his holy soul! Suddenly, even the light of the divine countenance was withdrawn, God the Father frowns upon the Son of his love. O this frown! this mysterious, tremendous frown! It spreads an unearthly gloom over the mind of the sufferer; it wraps his soul in agony; it extorts the piercing, bitter cry "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Thank God! the cloud soon passed away. The tide of sorrow ceased to flow. "It is finished!" said the dying but triumphant Saviour, and that word sealed the redemption of a ruined world! But this brings us to consider, more particularly, the last inquiry based upon our text:

III. For whom or for what did he thus suffer? Not for himself. No, he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. There was nothing in his own person to attract the lightnings of divine vengeance.



For whom or what, then, did he suffer? Not for sinning angels. No, for,

“From heaven the sinning angels fell;

And wrath and darkness chained them down.”

This glorious one never interposed to shield them. They, in righteous judgement, were left exposed to wrath; were left to bear the punishment of their own sin. The question then returns again, For whom or for what did Christ suffer? This question is one which comes near to us, and one, methinks, which should have power to melt the hardest heart, and subdue the most rebellious soul. Only think! the very objects for which Christ suffered are not far away. They are near us. They are within the walls of this very house, this very day! He suffered for sinners of Adam's race! This doctrine is abundantly taught in this volume. It is confirmed by the testimony of many, who “spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” “Christ, our Passover,” says Paul, “was sacrificed for us;” yea, “died for us.” “He suffered for us,” says Peter; yea, “he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.” And what is the language of John? “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins.” And again, hear the beautiful doxology, which he offers up in his own name, and that of the whole Church, militant and triumphant—“Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father—to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

But observe, this doctrine of the atonement, or substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, was equally well known to the prophets of ancient days. Hence the language of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." And Zechariah, speaking in the name of the Lord, evidently has reference to the same thing, when he uses this language: "As for thee, also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water." The Saviour himself taught the same doctrine of the atonement, when he said, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And certainly, also, there is reference to the same thing, what time all the redeemed in heaven are represented as singing this song: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Whatever cavils or objections may be started against the doctrine by sceptics and unbelievers, we see plainly it is a Bible doctrine; it is written in the Scriptures as with a sunbeam. Yes, it is the great central doctrine of the Christian system, around which all others revolve, and upon which all others depend. Strike it out, and you strike the sun from the firmament! you wrap the whole world in gloom! you shroud the whole family of man in the darkness of

never-ending despair! But the doctrine is not only a Bible doctrine, it is most precious. It is full of beauty and sweetness; of grandeur and of glory. It is calculated to excite the highest admiration; to fill the whole soul with the full tide of wonder, love, and joy.

You may have seen the representation given of this matter by Christmas Evans, the eloquent Welsh divine. I do not recollect his words; I give you, as well as I can, the main idea: Suppose a large enclosure, walled up to heaven, with gates of brass. Within this enclosure, a large multitude of human beings, presenting every form and variety of woe. On the outer side, Mercy is seen, leaning upon the gate weeping. As, ever and anon, she looks through the bars, at the wretched crowd, she sighs, and exclaims, "O that this gate were open! O that I could but enter in! I would heal the sick; I would raise the fallen; I would cheer the faint; I would bind up the broken-hearted; I would soothe the wretched; I would wipe away the tears from the eyes of the sorrowful; I would diffuse happiness on every hand!" Just at this time, the heavens are opened, and the Son of God is seen descending, in pomp and grandeur, surrounded by a host of mighty angels. Hovering over the gate, he looks kindly at Mercy, as she weeps, and says, "Mercy, why weepest thou?" "Mine eyes affect my heart," replies Mercy; "I have gazed at this wretched throng; I have contemplated their many sorrows. Their case is truly an evil one. O, that this gate were opened! O, that I could enter in! I would heal the sick; I would raise the fallen! I would cheer the faint; I would bind up

the broken-hearted; I would make them happy!" "And why can you not enter in?" says the Son of God. "These," replies Mercy, "are sinners; they have rebelled against the Eternal King, and stern Justice has reared these walls to heaven, and bolted and barred this gate of brass." "Is there no remedy?" said the Son of God. "None," said Mercy; and again she sighed, and her tears trickled down! "No remedy?" repeated the Son of God. "None," said Mercy, "except one of sufficient dignity can be found, who would be willing to make an atonement for them—bearing their sins, in his own body, upon the tree." "Do I possess sufficient dignity?" said the Son of God. Mercy bowed before the "Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Justice was appealed to by the heavenly One. Justice bowed low in the presence of Jehovah's equal—in the presence of him whom all the angels in heaven are commanded to worship and adore. That was a time of love. The heart of the Blessed One yearned over Adam's race; and he said, "Upon me be this evil, Justice. I will take their place. For them, I will make the great atonement; I will bear their sins, in my own body, upon the tree." "When?" said Justice. "Four thousand years from this time," replied the Son of God. It was ratified; it was recorded in the archives of heaven. And Justice, with a mighty hand, opened the ponderous gate; and Mercy entered. With angel speed, she flew! She mingled with the crowd; she healed the sick; she raised the fallen; she cheered the faint; she bound up the broken hearted; she made many, many happy! She



was engaged in this blessed work through the long roll of four thousand years. At the time appointed, Justice descended, upon a black and stormy cloud. His hand grasped fierce lightnings—at his feet rolled mighty thunders! The earth trembled, and the sun ceased to shine! “Mercy!” exclaimed stern Justice. “Mercy! the hour is come! Where is the substitute?” “Yonder he is,” replies Mercy; “yonder he is, bearing his cross on Calvary’s brow!” Justice looked up to heaven, and called for fire to descend, and light upon the soul of the holy Jesus! Fire descended upon the victim! It burned, and burned furiously! It consumed the humanity, but when it touched the divinity, it expired! And Mercy, with joy unutterable, exclaimed, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men!” Yea, heaven rang jubilee, whilst saints and angels, without number shouted, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men!”

O my brethren, the scene presented on Calvary was truly a wonderful scene! The work there accomplished was, beyond all comparison, a mighty work, a glorious work. It is that which will add countless millions of happy beings to the already innumerable host of shining ones in glory! and that which will, through all the cycles of endless years, fill the great temple of God Almighty with sounding praise! And, my Christian brethren, what shall we say of Him, who, as we have already said, on the cross crushed the serpent’s head, calmed the frowns of angry justice, and there won for his people crowns of glory, and thrones of everlasting

splendor? Well has the name "Wonderful" been added to the splendid list of names and titles which he bears and will forever bear! He is wonderful in his twofold nature, being both God and man! He is wonderful in his birth; wonderful in his life; wonderful in his death; wonderful in his resurrection, and wonderful in his ascension. He is wonderful in the eyes of angels, and wonderful in the eyes of all worlds; but especially should he be considered wonderful in our eyes, for O how wonderful was that love which caused him to suffer such loss, such indignity, and such untold sorrows on our account! How wonderful that he who was so rich should, for our sakes, become so poor! That he who in heaven commanded the treasures of the universe, should on earth have no place where to lay his head! How wonderful, that he who was originally the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, should wrap his Godhead in a veil of our inferior clay! How wonderful, that he who was God's co-equal, co-eternal Son, should exchange the bosom of his Father for a manger! How wonderful, that he who is the Fountain of all glory, should become a "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief!" that he who is the Angel of Mercy, should find no mercy himself! that he who is the final Judge, should himself stand condemned at Pilate's bar! How wonderful, that he whose title is "King of kings and Lord of lords," should exchange his throne for a cross, his diadem of glory for a crown of thorns, and his robes of light and majesty for a vesture dipped in blood! Think, O my soul, how wonderful,

that he who was the source of all honor, should be buffeted, and scourged, and spit upon! that he who was the Prince of life, should be slain! and that he whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should be laid in Joseph's tomb! "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." Wonderful, wonderful Saviour!

"Come, expressive silence, muse his praise."

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## SERMON IX.\*

### THE TOMB OF JESUS.

Come see the place where the Lord lay,—MATT. xxviii. 9.

THERE is a power of association, and the exercise of this oftentimes awakens feelings both pleasant and mournful to the soul. Returning, for example, to the place of our nativity, after a long absence, how do the recollections of former times crowd upon the mind! The scenes of our childhood are before us, and every object around serves to give rise to a train of pleasing or saddening reflection. This house, that field, this beaten pathway, that shady grove—all have a nameless charm, by reason of certain tender recollections associated with them. Walk over the field of battle, where the contest raged which decided the fate of your country; and, if there her independence was achieved, how sacred is the spot—how

\*For some fine thoughts in this sermon, I acknowledge myself indebted to Dr. Sprague, of Albany.

pleasant are all the associations thereof! But if there "freedom shrieked," and the chains of despotism were made strong, you sigh and turn away. Visit the subterranean ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii; and as you stand amid the relics of ancient magnificence and grandeur, there is, so to speak, a resurrection of the dead before you. You can almost imagine that you are actually holding converse with those over whose slumbering ashes many a long century has rolled. Enter the graveyard, approach that hallowed spot, where sleeps in death some venerated father, or beloved mother, or wife, or brother, or sister, or some sweet little babe; and how does busy memory hurry you back to some past scene of domestic enjoyment! The scenes of by-gone days are full before you; and under the influence of a kind of momentary delirium, you are ready to speak to the very dead, and say—"Farewell, dear object of my tenderest affections, farewell!" Silence reigns! Pensive you hang over the cold monumental marble; or, in the sadness of a smitten heart, you gaze upon the rank grass which waves over precious dust. Still, silence reigns! A soft enchantment is upon you. You linger—you look—you drop the tear of affection—you think unutterable things! O how sacred is that spot! How tender are all the associations thereof! Disciples of Jesus, you, who this day are to commemorate his dying love, "come, see the place where the Lord lay!" There was a garden, and in that garden there was a sepulchre: there laid they the body of our Lord. It was the work of a friend, the last sad tribute of his love. Yes, the bloody deed had now been



accomplished; the Lord of glory had been crucified and slain. He had bowed his head upon the cross, and exclaimed, with his dying breath, "It is finished!" The soldier, too, had thrust the spear into his side, when Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and who also was one of Jesus' disciples, went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of our Lord. Having obtained the precious boon, he took the body down from the cross, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewed out of the rock. See O! see! there sleeps in death the Redeemer of the world!

"Three days within the grave's unbroken gloom

The hope of Israel slept;

Three mournful days, around the hallowed tomb,

The chosen watch was kept."

And now the grey dawn is seen in the east; the shadows of night are fleeing away. Let us, in imagination, fall in with the beloved women, who, with spices and ointments, are going to the sepulchre. And, as they were going, they said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre?" And when they came, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great." And now commences a series of events, the most surprising that men or angels ever witnessed. But let us hear the narrative of the Evangelist: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled

back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And, for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered, and said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth forth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." What strange tidings are these! The Master risen from the dead! Yes, it is even so; for the beloved women have seen a vision of angels, which affirmed the fact. Nay, one in bright clothing points to the empty tomb, and says, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay!" Is this a dream? Is this the vision of a distempered imagination? O no; for there sits the angel in bright clothing!—and his voice, it rings so sweetly upon the ear, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." As if he had said, Let the keepers shake, and become as dead men! I have no word of comfort for them. But, beloved women, fear not ye. I know what brought you here. I see the spices and ointments in your hands: Fear not ye; nor is there any occasion for spices and ointments now! The Lord is risen! is risen indeed! Do you doubt it? The body is gone! The tomb is empty! "Come, see the place where the Lord lay!" O that sacred, hallowed spot! How dear are all the associations thereof! They are such as dying Christians may well linger upon: they are such as saints in glory love; and

such as may form an appropriate and delightful theme for this, the morning of our communion Sabbath.

I. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and mark the proof of his resurrection. When the angel said, "He is not here, but is risen," he points to the empty tomb, as proof of the fact. I know that in ordinary circumstances, the absence of a body deposited in a tomb, or sepulchre, is no proof, whatever, of the resurrection of that body; but in the case before us, it is the most convincing that can be adduced. Observe, it is admitted that the body of our Saviour was laid in the tomb. It is admitted that when there laid, it was under the power of Death. It is admitted that our Lord frequently predicted that he would rise again from the dead on the third day. And it is well known that the chief priests and elders had special reasons for falsifying, if they could, the predictions of our Lord. Moreover, that a stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre; that this stone was sealed, and a guard was set—these things also are not denied; and yet, on the morning of the third day, the body is not there! The tomb is empty—the body gone! Now, the question is, What has become of that body? If not risen, it must have been taken away. By whom? Not by the chief priests and Pharisees; this was the very thing against which they wished to guard. Not by the Roman band. They had no inducement. By whom, then, was it taken away? Not by the disciples of our Lord. They neither would, nor could. They would not, for he had been laid there by a friend, and they had no motive to disturb his repose.

But suppose that they had desired never so much to take away his body, it was entirely out of their power; for they were a few disheartened ones, and the Roman band was sixty strong. But suppose the disciples had resolved, at all hazards, to take away the body of their Master; there must have been a struggle. But there is no mention made of this struggle. But, said the chief priest to some of the watch, who came and told him what had transpired in the morning, say ye, "his disciples came and stole him away while we slept." Mark! a guard of sixty soldiers asleep! all asleep! and so profoundly asleep, that the noise necessarily occasioned by the rolling away of a great stone, and the removing of the body, awaked not a single one! Believe this, who can! and yet we are obliged to believe this, or the account given by the Evangelist, for a substantial reason—there is no other. Now, remember, first, the testimony of Mary Magdalene, to whom our Saviour appeared first after his resurrection from the dead; then the testimony of the other women, to whom he also appeared, saying, "All hail!" and next comes the testimony of the two disciples, who saw him while on their way to Emmaus; then the testimony of the eleven, to whom he appeared, as they sat at meat, the door being shut; and, last of all, hear the testimony of the converted Pharisee, who once breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ. I have received of the Lord, says he, that which I also delivered unto you, how that Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; that he was buried, that he rose from the dead again on



the third day, according to the Scriptures; that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of about five hundred brethren at once, the greater part of whom remain unto this present time, but some are fallen asleep. Last of all, he was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time. Now, consider these witnesses, their number, their credibility, and how they bear united testimony to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and say, if human testimony can establish any fact, under heaven, is not this fact established? The Lord is risen—is risen indeed! But some may be ready to say, the speaker has consumed time unnecessarily, in thus entering upon the proof of a fact which we all admit. Now, so far from this being a needless consumption of time, I must beg your indulgence whilst I occupy a little more time upon the same subject; for I deem the matter of great importance, and shall, I hope, make this to appear in a few moments.

Suppose a person, utterly unacquainted with the early history of our beloved country, should arrive at the port of New York on the morning of the 4th of July. Flags are flying, drums are beating, bells are ringing, cannon are firing, the military are parading. Everything indicates the return of some joyous day, some grand jubilee. The stranger is astonished. By and by the citizens are seen gathering together in crowds, and wending their way to some splendid edifice. He mingles with the throng, and soon finds himself seated in some spacious hall, tastefully decorated. He looks around upon a “sea of heads”—every eye sparkling, every face dressed in

smiles. At a signal given, silence reigns. An individual rises in some conspicuous place, and holding in his hand a book, reads what is called "The Declaration of Independence." Another follows with a heart-stirring oration. He gives an account of the Revolutionary struggle in strains of thrilling eloquence; he rehearses the achievements of the patriots and heroes of that day; and, in winding up, he apostrophizes the shade of Washington, and, pointing to the star spangled banner leaning upon the wall, exclaims, "Long may it wave over the land of the free, and the home of the brave!" Deafening shouts are heard; martial music strikes up, and as the crowd, all joyous, retires, suppose the stranger comes up to one who is an American, and says, "Stranger, can you tell me the meaning of all this? Why the waving of so many flags? the ringing of so many bells? the firing of so many cannon? and what means the scene presented in this house?" "O," says the American, with his cheeks flushed with patriotic feeling, "this is the Fourth of July!" "The Fourth of July! and what do you mean by that?" "Why, sir, I mean that this is the birthday of our nation's independence!" Now, suppose this foreigner should sneeringly say, "The birthday of your nation's independence! There is no such thing! You Americans are all gulled! You are a very simple people to believe any such thing. The Declaration of Independence, as you call it, is a forgery, and that oration all a farce. There was never such an historical event as you all pretend to commemorate!"

My brethren, you understand the matter: you know

the application I would make.—From the beginning of the world to a certain period, the seventh day of the week was set apart as the weekly Sabbath. From that period, down to the present time, the first day of the week has, by the most enlightened nations upon earth, been set apart—to commemorate what?—the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Now, the question is, How could so many nations harmoniously agree to set apart a day to commemorate an event, which event never took place? The thing is impossible. The very existence, then, of the Christian Sabbath, is a standing monument—is proof positive of the fact which it commemorates—the resurrection of Christ. This is an argument which, we think, cannot be resisted; an argument which will “stand the the test of scrutiny, of talents, and of time.” Yes, the Lord is risen—is risen indeed! Thank God, our Redeemer slumbers no longer in the tomb! He has triumphed over death! He has triumphed over the grave! The Lord is risen, is risen indeed! Hail to the day that saw him rise! Come to the tomb of Jesus, and mark the proof of his resurrection!

II. “Come, see the place where the Lord lay,” and mark the truth of the Christian religion. This is inseparably connected with the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Prove the one, and the other follows, as a matter of course. Hence, I have thought it no waste of time, to make the proof of the resurrection of Christ perfectly plain and convincing. This established, we have an argument for the truth of Christianity, which, I humbly conceive, may not be set aside. Let us look at the matter.

It is well known that the Old Testament prophets predicted the resurrection of the Messiah. Our Saviour himself frequently affirmed that he would rise again from the dead, on the third day. Nay, he was willing to rest the proof of his Messiahship upon this very point. Now, then, if Christ be not risen from the dead, he is not the predicted Messiah, he is not what he declared himself to be—the Son of God, and the only Saviour of the world. But, if he be risen from the dead, as we have so clearly demonstrated, then is he, beyond all doubt, the predicted Messiah, the Son of God, and the only Saviour of the world; and, consequently, the religion which he taught is divinely true. This argument was urged with great force by the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost; and it flashed conviction upon three thousand, and was the means of their immediate conversion to Christianity. And we find the apostle Paul laying great stress upon the same thing: indeed he makes the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ that upon which the truth or falsehood of the Christian religion must depend. Observe his language: “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they, also, which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished; but now,” continues he, (and his heart kindles at the thought,) “but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.”

If there be an unbeliever present, I would respectfully request him to take home with him the argument for the truth of the Christian religion, drawn from the resurrection of Christ, and I am bold to say he will find it one



perfectly convincing, perfectly unanswerable. How thankful should we be, that the truth of our religion is so clear and plain! The glorious superstructure of our faith has many massive pillars to sustain it, but the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the grand central pillar—"the keystone of the arch, which shuts and binds the whole."

Just here, let us for a moment pause, and think—Is the Christian religion true? Then let us remember that there is a God in the heavens, a pure and holy God, whose eye is ever upon us; and that we and this God must meet. Is the Christian religion true? Then let us not forget that we are sinners, and need a Saviour; and that "other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Is the Christian religion true? Then let us remember that there is a heaven, a world of unspeakable and everlasting joy; and also a hell, a world of unspeakable and everlasting sorrow; and that we are all, this very moment, going towards the one or the other! Is the Christian religion true? Then I appeal to every candid person, is it wise, is it prudent, to neglect the high interests of the soul and eternity? The Christian religion is true! Sinner, it is time for you to think; and suffer me, just here, to ask, What are your hopes for great eternity?

III. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and contrast his humiliation and his glory. Draw near, and contemplate the blessed Jesus, whilst yet he slumbers in the tomb. Ah! see that sacred form, wrapped in the winding-sheet! Death's leaden sceptre is upon it, and

not a solitary ray of divinity beams around it! See those blessed hands of his; the mark of the rugged nails is there. Those blessed feet! There, too, the nails have done their dismal work! Remove that linen, which covers his body—alas! the cruel spear went deep into his side! Take away that napkin about his head—ah me! I see it, my Saviour wore a thorny crown! Look at that blessed countenance, once beaming with benevolence; now how changed in death! That blessed face, once so lovely; now so sadly marred! Alas! those blessed eyes of his are closed now! That blessed tongue of his is still now! That blessed bosom is cold now! O my Redeemer! He lies under the power of death, as one turned over to corruption and the worm! How deep is this humiliation! But wait, this humiliation is only for an appointed time. On the third day he is to rise again. And now the morning dawns; and lo! the silence of the tomb is broken. The bands of death are bursting! An angel descends from heaven. There is an earthquake. The stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulchre, and the blessed Jesus rises! “And did he rise? And did he rise? Hear it, O ye nations; hear it, O ye dead! He rose He rose! He burst the bars of death! Then first humanity triumphant passed the crystal gates of life, and seized eternal joy!” Yes, he rose! he rose! He ascended up on high; he led captivity captive; he received gifts for men; He entered the world above. Lift up your heads, O ye gates: even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. Lo, now, high in the heavens he is

exalted, far above all principality and power; angels gather around him, and all the heavenly host unite to crown him Lord of all!

What a contrast, what an amazing contrast have we here! Once in the sepulchre on earth, now on his throne in the highest heavens! Once wrapped in the winding-sheet; now arrayed in robes of light and glory! Once a prisoner of the grave, and guarded by Roman soldiers; now the Lord of glory, attended by the retinue of the heavenly world! Once under the power of death; now the Prince of life; death's conqueror! leading death and hell captive, chained to the wheels of his triumphant car. Wondrous Saviour! Surely, one has well said, "To describe the full glories of the Redeemer, requires a new arrangement of letters, a celestial alphabet, composed of suns and constellations!" Communicants, as in your meditations you cluster around the cross and the tomb of Jesus, do not forget his glory and renown. As you muse upon the words of him who said, "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth up his life for his sheep," don't forget these words, which are also his, "I am he that liveth, and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of hell and of death!" Blessed Saviour! we will remember thy love! But again,

IV. "Come, see the place where the Saviour lay," and mark the perfection of his sacrifice. When the Redeemer came upon earth, it was upon a specific errand, it was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Bowing his head upon the cross, he significantly exclaimed,

"It is finished!" And what, I ask, is his resurrection from the dead, but the unequivocal and authentic response of the Everlasting Father, "It is finished!" If the atonement was not complete, God the Father had never sent an angel to roll back the stone from the door of the sepulchre; nor had he ever sent a cloud, as a chariot, to take his Son home to heaven. The release of the prisoner, then, is proof of the satisfaction of the debt; and his triumphant ascension the crowning evidence of the perfection of his sacrifice. Some persons inquire, Is the atonement limited, or is it general? Did Christ die for all, or only for the elect? To this question I would reply, nearly in the words of Calvin: I believe that the death of Christ is a perfect sacrifice; is of infinite value, and sufficient for the redemption of the whole world; but is effectually applied only to those that believe. The sun in the heavens was made originally for the immediate and special benefit of our first parents. If there were never to be another individual of the human family upon earth, it was necessary that this luminary should be just what it is, to make a perfect day: no additional brightness is necessary to furnish all needful light for unnumbered millions. Hence the language of the Saviour, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thank God, the atonement has been made. All legal obstructions have been taken out of the way; and now the command comes from the Saviour himself: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is



baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Yes, all things are now ready. Come to the wedding: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. Let him that heareth say, Come. Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"Salvation! O salvation!  
The joyful sound proclaim,  
Till earth's remotest nation  
Has learned Messiah's name."

V. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and mark the stability of the divine purposes. Men frequently form, and then change their purposes, or say their purposes remain the same. Many unforeseen events may prevent their accomplishment. Under currents and baffling winds may turn aside the mariner from his destined port. Floods and droughts may defeat the purposes of the planter. Famine or pestilence, fire, or the fury of the tempest, may defeat the schemes of the mightiest conquerors. But, believe me, my brethren, no under currents nor baffling winds, nor flood, nor drought, nor famine, nor pestilence, nor anything else can change the plans, or defeat the purposes of Him, who has "prepared his throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all." Observe, it was the purpose of God the Father that Jesus Christ, the Son of his love, should rise from the dead on the third day. Various efforts were made to defeat this event. When the stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre, the stone was sealed, and a watch was set, expressly to prevent his rising from the dead. But,

O foolish ones! what is the rolling of a stone to the door of the sepulchre, or the setting of a watch, to Him who has all power in heaven and on earth; who need only speak, and worlds on worlds would roll from his creative hand; who need only will it, and all would again sink in fiery ruins! Yes, my brethren, as nothing stops the ocean's tide, or turns aside the bright orb of day; so nothing can stop or turn aside the purposes of Him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Has he said it, and shall he not do it? Has he commanded, and shall it not stand fast? For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven!

Here, again, let us for a moment pause, and think. Are the purposes of God firm and stable? Then let the impenitent sinner tremble, for according to the Scriptures it is the immutable purpose of an immutable God, that all who die impenitent shall perish; that all who go down to the grave without a Saviour, shall be lost to all eternity! Go, sinner, and stem the ocean's tide; go and roll back the chariot of the sun; and when you have done that, there is one thing you cannot do—you cannot, dying in sin, you cannot escape the damnation of hell! Dear fellow-sinner, let me entreat you not to make light of this; for the word of the Saviour, touching this matter, has gone forth; and surely you have not forgotten his solemn declaration—Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away!

Are the purposes of God firm and stable? then may the penitent sinner be encouraged; and all who will come to Christ may have peace and joy in believing; for, accord-

ing to the Scriptures, it is the immutable purpose of an immutable God, that every one who truly repents shall be forgiven; and every one who comes to Christ, in the exercise of a true and living faith, shall be accepted—shall be saved.

VI. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and contemplate the security of the Church, and the certainty of her ultimate triumph. The Church is now in the midst of enemies, like Daniel in the lion's den, or like a lamb surrounded by ravening wolves; but Zion enjoys her Monarch's love, and glorious things are spoken of the city of our God. According to the Scriptures, God is in the midst of her; God will help her, and that right early. When the Master was laid in the Sepulchre, his disciples, cast down and disquieted, were as sheep which had no shepherd. Everything seemed dark and discouraging. No doubt they were tempted to fear that the cause of Christ was ruined for ever. O, it was indeed a gloomy and a dark day! but, when the blessed Saviour burst the bars of death, and rose triumphant from the tomb, all was changed! Hope sprang up afresh, and, so to speak, methinks they heard a voice of sweet encouragement, saying, Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Yes, here is encouragement. He who can burst the bars of death, can build up the broken down walls of Zion; and he who can ascend up to heaven, in a cloud, can surely raise his Church to glory and renown. As no power on earth can quench the lights of heaven, or stay the chariot of the rising sun, even so, no power on earth can quench the

light of the gospel, or hold in check the hastening triumphs of the Prince of Peace! The Lord is risen, is risen indeed! He has triumphed over all his enemies. He has all power in heaven and on earth; and when he sees proper to say to his Church, "Arise and shine," then shall the Church put on her beautiful garments, and look forth as the morning—fair as the morn, clear as the sun, and terrible to her enemies as an army with banners  
Once more:

VII. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and think of the bright prospects of the believer, and his hopes beyond the tomb. As Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. Very sad and dismal is the change, to mortal eye, which passes upon the body of the believer in the hour of death. The eyes cease to sparkle; the bloom upon the cheek is gone; the features are haggard; the ears are heavy; the tongue is dumb; the heart is cold; the frame is motionless! That countenance, upon which we were wont to gaze, perhaps, with admiration and delight, is now so changed we can scarcely recognize it; and that form, once so lovely, is now wrapped in the winding-sheet, and fit only for the grave, and for the worm! How sad is this change! How deep is this humiliation! But wait, another change is to come: that body is to rise again; those eyes are to sparkle again; an immortal bloom is to be upon that cheek; those features are to have a divine beauty; and that countenance is to be lovely as an angel's! Yes, the poet says:



“ Arrayed in glorious grace,  
Shall these vile bodies shine,  
And every shape, and every face  
Look heavenly and divine.”

“ We would not have you be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which sleep,” says the apostle, “ that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope; for, as Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” They shall rise in beauty and splendor. They shall leave their dusty beds, and appear as angels coming out of the ground! Yea, they shall rise in the likeness of the Son of God. For thus teaches the apostle: “ Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” O how wonderful is this! and how cheering to those who have looked, in sadness and grief, upon the pale, cold, and motionless form of some beloved one, who has fallen asleep in Jesus. Has this dear friend fallen under the power of death? And was not even the great Redeemer himself once under the power of death? Did you see the loved form of your friend wrapped in the winding-sheet, and laid in the grave? And was not the body of your Lord also thus arrayed, and laid in a tomb? Ah! my brethren, this has sanctified death, and the winding-

sheet, and the grave. If Jesus died, why should we not be willing to die? And if he was laid in the tomb, why should we not be willing to have the same bed of repose?

“The graves of all his saints he blessed,  
And softened every bed,  
Where should the dying members rest  
But with their dying Head?”

I must say, my dear brethren, that this association of the tomb of Jesus, is to me one of a peculiarly sacred and pleasing character. It does much to strip death of its sting, and the grave of its terror. Shall the servant be greater than his Master? Shall not the disciple, in this particular, be willing to be as his Lord? and, especially, as he is to share with his Master in the triumphs of a glorious resurrection. It is enough! Amen. So let it be!—

“I would not live alway: no, welcome the tomb,  
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom;  
Then, sweet be my rest, till he bid me arise  
To hail him in triumph, descending the skies!”

Blessed be God! the Lord is risen—is risen indeed!  
Come, see the place where the Lord lay!

## SERMON X.

## CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things,—PHILIPPIANS iv. 8.

TRUE religion, unquestionably, elevates and improves the human character; gives it a mingled sweetness and dignity, a perfection and excellence, which nothing else possibly can. Great talent and heroic achievements may add splendor to a name, may secure the admiration of a world. But after all, "'Tis moral grandeur which makes the man." And what is moral grandeur? What gives it beauty, and charm, and body, and soul, but true religion? This is the sum and perfection of whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report. Look at your blessed Redeemer: no laurels of the conqueror encircled his brow; no triumphal arches commemorated his victories; and yet, even as a man, Jesus stands first on the rolls of fame! And wherefore? Not merely because he spake as never man spake; not merely because he wrought stupendous miracles—No, nor even because of this and that distinguished trait of moral character, but it was because of the assemblage of all virtues; because of the clustering of all graces; it was because of the finished beauty of his whole character; for in him, as one well observes, was

"all light, without a shade; all beauty, without a spot." Now, such as our Saviour was, in all his inimitable perfections, should we be. The standard is high—I know it—it is exceeding high, but it is good for us to have a high standard, that we may be thoroughly sensible of our own short-comings, and convinced that we do need a better righteousness than our own, and must have it, or where God is, we cannot come—where heaven is, we cannot dwell. And now, I wish to lay before you, for your serious consideration, the points of Christian morality presented in our text. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

I. "Whatsoever things are true."—Truth is a cardinal virtue, and like the name of the ever-blessed God, it is most sacred, and must, in no form or fashion, be trifled with. Truth has reference to two things—veracity and faithfulness. By veracity, I mean the speaking as we think, and feel, and desire; and by faithfulness, the squaring of our words by our actions. Veracity is necessary to social intercourse. If it be trampled upon, distrust and suspicion would invade every bosom; the whole frame and texture of the social system would be deranged, would be dissolved. Veracity is essential to a good character; no matter what a man's reputation or standing in other respects may be, if he be not a man of strict and undeviating veracity, there is a foul stain upon



that man's character, which, like the blood of the murdered man upon the floor, (as it is fabled,) nothing can wash out. Moreover, veracity is requisite in order to our admittance into the world above. "Nothing," says Paul, "that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, shall ever enter there." Now, let all seriously think upon these things, who practice deceptions of any kind; those, for example, who indulge in flattery, as well as those who deal in slander. Those who make hollow-hearted professions of friendship, as well as those who bear false witness against their neighbor; those also who color narratives and exaggerate matters of fact, as well as those who tell wilful and downright falsehoods; in short, let all seriously think upon these things who, whether for amusement trifle with truth, or for baser purposes, they trample it under their feet! And here I will, just in a passing way, advert to a practice which prevails in some of our Atlantic cities, but whether in this region or country, I know not—the practice of masters and mistresses directing their servants to say that they are not at home, when at home they are! Whatsoever things are true, says our text; think on these things.

And now, let us see if we may not find a spot, and a very dark spot, too, where nothing of the kind was anticipated; I mean, upon the escutcheon of the moral man, so called. What are we to understand by veracity? The speaking as we think, and feel, and desire. Well, this moral man, so called, makes confession of sins committed, and there is no contrition in his soul. He makes acknowledgment for mercies received, and there is no

gratitude in his heart. He prays, like Augustine of old, to be delivered from certain besetting sins, and, like the same Augustine, he is afraid that God will take him at his word, for he really does not wish to be delivered from those sins. Now, this man is wanting in the very matter of veracity, and yet he esteems himself a very moral man. But, let us see if we may not find another spot on the moral character of the same man. Take this case: He is in the sanctuary. The minister reasons well concerning "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come;" he brings the high claims of God and eternity to bear strongly upon the understanding, and the conscience, and the hearts of his hearers; this man's attention is arrested; his conscience is troubled; pungent conviction seizes upon him; he feels that he is a sinner; he feels that he is exposed to wrath divine; he trembles, like Felix, and, like Agrippa, he is almost persuaded to be a Christian. Now, mark! Just in this frame of mind—really anxious in relation to his eternal interests—the services close, and as he retires, he meets with some gay associate, and fearing lest that associate might think the sermon had made an impression on his mind, he assumes an air of indifference, makes some witty remark, and forces a smile! O the hypocrite! My brethren, believe me, there are hypocrites out of the Church, as well as in the Church; and many of these moral men, so called, are not so very moral after all.

But truth, as we have said, has reference not only to veracity, but to faithfulness—the squaring of our words by our actions. And here, it must be confessed that

there are persons in this world of whom we might have expected better things, who are strangely, marvellously wanting in just this thing. They make promises, they enter into engagements—and break their word! At such a time, this bill shall be paid; at such a time, this work shall be done; at such a time, this business shall certainly be attended to:—confidence is reposed, and, to the serious annoyance of another, they break their word, they violate their engagements; and this they will do, over and over again; and yet such have the effrontery to call themselves moral men! O shame, where is thy blush? If you should know of a professor of religion guilty in this matter, I have one request to make: “Tell it not in Gath; tell it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice; lest the daughters of the Philistines triumph!” O tell it not to the man that “mouths the heavens,” nor to him who “reels o’er the full bowl;” and especially, tell it not to the mere moralist, lest sinners, through all their tribes and gradations, should scornfully curl the lip, and, pointing to every member of the Church, should sneeringly say:—“And what do ye more than others?” I am aware that sometimes promises are made, and unforeseen events place it out of the power of the person giving the promise to keep it. In such cases, all candid and reasonable persons are ready to make all due allowance; but there are cases where a promise is made, and that is the last of it! This is a sore evil under the sun; and if it be a professor of religion who is guilty in this matter, be it known that he brings a reproach upon the religion of Christ; he does much to

block up the pathway to heaven against those around. Let every man, and especially every professor of religion, bear distinctly in mind, that his word is his bond, and that truth, as we have said, like the name of the ever-blessed God, is most sacred, and must in no form or fashion be trifled with. But, let us again examine, and see if we may not find yet another spot upon the escutcheon of the moral man, so called. If we are to believe him, he never breaks his word. He would scorn to do such a thing! Now, let us draw aside the curtain, and tell you a little of the secret history of that man. He was laid upon a bed of sickness on a certain occasion. A physician was sent for in haste. The physician came, felt his pulse, looked very gravely, and prescribed strong remedies. The patient was alarmed, thought himself in great danger; and knowing well that he was not prepared to meet his Maker, he begged a friend to pray for him. He did more than this; he made a promise—he made a solemn vow to his Maker, that if his life was spared he would devote his remaining days to the service of God. Well, his life was spared. Within a few weeks he was restored to good health again. Shall I tell you what that man did? He violated his promise; he broke his vow; he lied!—not unto men, but unto God! When the speaker said that such a man lied, you thought him rather harsh and rough in his language; but, when he added, “Not unto men, but unto God,” he softened the phrase. And is it come to this? To lie to a fellow-creature is a serious affair; but to lie unto God is a small matter! O, when will men view things in their true light! and when will the moral



man, so called, understand, that when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, he is found wanting!

II. "Whatsoever things are honest"—*semna*, in the original; which means, that which is worthy of respect and veneration. The Christian religion, presenting an upright course of moral conduct, based upon sound and evangelical principles, commends itself to every man's judgment, whether he be righteous or wicked. For example, let a man of sterling worth, of consistent Christian character, be unexpectedly thrown into the company of the intemperate or profane, and much mistaken am I, if we do not immediately see the commanding influence of that man's dignity of character:

"So spake the cherub:——  
——Abashed the devil stood,  
And felt how awful goodness is—felt,  
And pined his loss."——

"Let no man despise thee," said Paul to Titus; that is, so live, that no man can despise thee. Maintain the dignity and consistency of the Christian character in all companies, in all circumstances. Be always ready to say, by word and deed, "I am a Christian," and, "I am not ashamed to own my Lord." Christian dignity! that will ever command respect. But think not that dignity and pride are the same thing. They are widely different. Our Saviour maintained the dignity of a Master at the very time that he washed his disciples' feet. "Whatsoever things are honest"—*semna*,—worthy of respect and veneration, "think on these things."

III. "Whatsoever things are just."—Here the apostle

brings to view, and recommends another cardinal virtue—justice; and by justice I mean a disposition to respect all rights, a disposition to meet all claims which are well founded. It is a very comprehensive principle, and will serve to regulate our conduct, not only in commercial and pecuniary matters, but also in matters of every kind. If, for example, I have a just claim to a person's gratitude, or respect, or service, my claim is just as binding upon him, as if it had reference to his person or to his estate. And now, see how very defective some persons are who have a very good opinion of themselves. This proud man will not cheat the poor, but he will trample them under foot. It is to render to all their dues. This is what Peter says. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor—and this falls in with the language of our blessed Saviour: Whatsoever ye would that others do unto you, do ye the same unto them likewise. This golden precept or rule was so much admired by the Emperor Alexander Severus, that he inscribed it upon his closet, quoted it in his judgments, and for the sake of it, honored Christ and favored his followers; and if so much admired by a pagan Roman emperor, how much more ought it to be admired and practised by those who have formally subscribed to the heavenly and sublime morality of the Son of God; and yet, how is the principle, as we have already intimated, treated with perfect disregard! This reckless slanderer will not rob his neighbor of his purse, but he will rob him of his character. This vile ingrate will repay money borrowed, but he will withhold gratitude

that is due. This outrageous husband will grant pecuniary support to his wife, but by his harshness, his unkindness, his neglect, he will break her heart. Is this according to the golden rule? or is this "to render to all their dues?" And now, what if I prove that no unconverted sinner is a just or morally honest man? I did not affirm it—I only said, what if I proved it. I will state a case; judge ye, you have an understanding as well as the speaker. Here is an individual. A and B, we will suppose, have claims against him, equally well founded. A has a claim for one hundred dollars, B for one thousand. The individual referred to likes Mr. A, but does not like Mr. B. Well, Mr. A presents his claim. "O, certainly, sir," says the individual, and taking out his pocket-book, he settles the claim to the smallest fraction. Very well, good as far as it goes. But when A retires, here comes Mr. B and presents his claim, and we will suppose that the said individual has no disposition to meet the claims of B, but is disposed to put him off as long as possible. Is this debtor a just or morally honest man? I think not; for what is justice or moral honesty? Is it not a disposition to respect all rights—a disposition to meet all claims well founded? But, according to the supposition made, the individual spoken of has a disposition to meet the claims of A, but no disposition to meet the claims of B; certainly he is not a just, or morally honest man! Now, let A represent man, and B the ever-blessed God. The moral man, so called, is willing to meet and settle the claims of his fellow-creatures. But when the claims of God are presented, these claims are not re-

spected; the unrenewed sinner has no disposition to meet them, but is disposed to put them off as long as possible, saying, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Is this a just or morally honest man? And now see the moral man, so called, like the eagle, soaring aloft, and smitten in mid heavens, he comes lumbering down to the ground, all his pride and plumage laid low in the dust! I tell you the truth, my brethren, I lie not; these mere moralists are "weighed in the balance and found wanting!" Only let them go into the eternal world with no better righteousness than that, and, mark my word, where God is they cannot come; where heaven is they can never dwell. Yes, these moral men must perish! Mistake me not. I am not crying down morality. Heaven forbid! But if by scriptural and common sense argument I can show that the most amiable, and the very best of the unconverted are weighed and found wanting, how certain is the perdition of those who do not even come up to their mark! How important it is to have a better righteousness than our own; for, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified."

IV. "Whatsoever things are pure."—The Christian religion would not only regulate our outward conduct, but would lay its hand upon the springs of action, and would control the whole moral man. It would have us to be pure in our motives, pure in our principles, pure in all our thoughts and imaginations, pure in our hearts—as it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now, if there be a single individual present



who bases his hopes of heaven upon the excellence of his moral character, I would ask him a question or two. Are you pure within? No evil thoughts? no evil feelings? no evil desires? Ah! believe me, the heart of the best man on earth is defiled with sin: yea, according to the prophet, is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Hence the strong language of Isaiah: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." What an idea this is! and how effectually does it destroy the hopes of the unregenerate man! I suppose a more virtuous man never lived than the prophet Isaiah; and yet he hesitated not to say, that all his personal righteousness was only as "filthy rags." Now, in connection with this, take this idea:—Heaven is a place of unsullied purity. The angels are robed in spotless white. The spirits of the just are also robed in white. They have not, it is true, the white robes of innocence, such as angels wear, but robes equally beautiful and white—robes "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." Now, only think, this man attempts to enter the gates of heaven having no better righteousness than his own—that is, he attempts to enter, clothed in rags, in filthy rags! Will he be permitted to enter? I suspect not! Ah! my hearers, believe me, we must have a better righteousness than our own; and verily, without the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, we can never, never enter into the heavenly world; for thus saith the glorious Son of God, "Ye must be born again." Yes,

“Our nature’s totally depraved,  
The heart a sink of sin,  
Without a change, we can’t be saved,  
We must be born again.”

Immortal man! Think upon these things, make no mistake. If a man dies, can he live again? Once lost, lost forever!

V. “Whatsoever things are lovely.” There are certain things which give a beauty and a charm, a finish to the character, and these things we are to think upon and show forth in our whole lives and conversation. Among these things which are “lovely,” I would mention a sweet and even temper, mild and unassuming manners, a courteous and polite behaviour, kind feeling, a generous heart, a sympathizing spirit—that which leads its possessor not only to rejoice with those that rejoice, but to weep with those that weep. And here let me lay before you some of these “lovely things,” in all the charms of a tangible exemplification. I have seen the young man of brilliant talents, rising up and showing respect to the man of silvery locks—youth bending before age. This was lovely. I have seen the maiden, of many charms, in the Sabbath-school room, with her interesting charge around her, whilst she was engaged in a work which the angels of God themselves might delight in. This was lovely. I have seen husbands who loved their wives and were not bitter against them; and, I have seen wives who were careful to render to their husbands the obedience of love; this, too, was lovely. I have seen parents who watched over their children with Christian anxiety, guarding their

morals with all care, anxious to promote their spiritual as well as temporal prosperity. Yea, I have seen them anxious to "allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way:" and I have seen children—both sons and daughters, very affectionate and respectful to their aged parents—consulting their wishes, anticipating their wants, endeavoring to strew their pathway with flowers, and cheer them in the evening of their days. This was lovely. I have seen brothers and sisters remarkably kind and affectionate to each other. They had no jarrings, indulged in no petty contradictions. They really loved each other, and desired to make each other happy. It was a lovely sight; like the family of Martha and Mary, and Lazarus, each of whom Jesus loved; yes, it was a lovely sight—a little type of heaven! I have seen masters who were careful to give unto their servants that which was just and equal, knowing that they had also a Master in heaven; and I have seen servants very conscientious in obeying their masters as required to do in the sacred volume. I have seen the faithful pastor, in the midst of the people of his charge, as a father in the midst of his family, every member of which was dear to his heart: and I have seen a whole congregation, who were always respectful and kind to their pastor; received him into their dwelling with a smile; heeded his counsels and instructions, and neglected not his temporal wants. I have dwelt the longer on such things, for two reasons: first, because such matters are too rarely adverted to in the pulpit; and secondly, because some professors of religion are not as consistent and lowly as they should be. Of Naaman, it was said, "Now Naaman, cap-

tain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honorable, because that by him the Lord had granted deliverance unto Syria; moreover, he was a mighty man in valor, but he was a leper." So it is with many around us; they have some fine traits of character, have many excellencies, but alas! poor human nature, they have some sad imperfections. I saw a talented minister of the gospel once:—he was zealous and active, and he was instrumental in doing much good, but I thought he was rather domineering and dictatorial. Alas! poor human nature! I saw another, he was not domineering or dictatorial. No! he was a gentle spirit; he had much of the milk of human kindness, but I thought he was not zealous as a minister; he was not earnest as a preacher; he was rather cold I thought, rather inclined to *snowing* upon the people. His words were very beautiful, but it seemed to me they were more like flakes of snow falling from his lips, than nails and goads, as they should have been. I saw another minister of the gospel; he was a young man, really eloquent and interesting, as a preacher, but I thought he was rather too fond of being nursed; moreover, some persons thought he was somewhat spiced with vanity. I saw an elder of the church; he was a prominent man, a man of some standing and influence; but I thought he was rather covetous and worldly-minded. His subscriptions to religious and benevolent objects were not up to his means. I saw another; he was not covetous—no; he was a generous hearted man, he had a large soul, and seemed never to forget the words of the Master, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;"



but I thought he was hasty in his temper. Perhaps his mother had never taught him that "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." I saw another member of the church; he was not hasty in his temper, he was not easily ruffled in his temper, but he was sadly inefficient; he did nothing to cause his influence to be felt; he was quite an amiable man, but in the church he was much of a cipher, and a drone. I saw a mother in Israel; she was an active member of the church, and was something of a Dorcas, moreover, her house was the ministers' hotel, she was very hospitable, but at times she was rather fretful and censorious, and would occasionally speak rather too freely about her neighbors. And I saw yet another female member of the church; she was lively and pleasant; had some fine traits of character, but she was rather fond of finery and parade; perhaps she had overlooked what the apostle James said about good works being a better adornment for a daughter of Zion than gold, or pearls, or costly array.

My pictures are not entirely fanciful; they are drawn from real life. Alas, poor human nature! Some persons have many things to recommend them; but there are some sad drawbacks. Indeed, there are some, who, although members of the Church, are by no means consistent members—and some are even positively unamiable. They think upon whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, but they seem to forget that the apostle adds, "whatsoever thing are lovely." They are not lovely in their temper and spirit, they are not

lovely in their manners; some are morose, and peevish, and fretful. Some are too uncharitable, and some too easily offended; and some again, are too penurious. They are selfish, and seem to live for themselves alone. They do not "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." They rather bring a reproach upon the religion which they profess, They cause "the way of truth to be evil spoken of," and confirm sinners in their wicked ways. I recollect a gentleman once made this remark to me, "Sir, my wife is a member of the Church; as for myself, I made no pretensions to religion; and yet, to tell you the truth, I must say I think my wife is just as peevish, and fretful, and worldly-minded as I am!" Daughter of Zion! beware how you give your husband any just cause to make a remark of this kind. Remember you are to win him to Christ by a "chaste conversation, coupled with fear." "Whatsoever things are lovely—think on these things." O, that all who have named the name of Christ would aim at being consistent Christians, and then would the most scornful see that true religion does indeed come to make better husbands and better wives, better parents and better children, better masters and better servants! What a powerful argument would this be for the truth of the Christian religion!

"So let our lips and lives express,  
The holy gospel we profess;  
So let our works and virtues shine  
To prove the doctrine all divine."

One item more:

VI. "Whatsoever things are of good report."—There

are certain things of which all persons approve, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, righteous or wicked. Permit me to mention some of these things, and cordially recommend them to your serious regard. First: Uniformity is of good report. The changeling in sentiment or conduct, nobody respects; for it seems that he wants judgment to form an opinion, or, forming an opinion, he wants firmness to maintain it. He that is our friend to-day, and our enemy to-morrow; one thing at this time and quite another at another time—who can respect such a one? No! we all like the man, who, amid all the scenes of life, “holds on the even tenor of his way,” presenting an humble imitation of Him, of whom it is said, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” My brethren, be uniform. Be not carried about by divers winds of doctrines. Be not of the number of those who are fickle-minded, and given to change. Be consistent and firm. Another thing of good report is catholicism. I use this word for want of a better. By catholicism, I mean the opposite of a narrow, contracted, bigoted, sectarian spirit; a spirit which, whilst it would lead its possessor most earnestly to “contend for the faith once delivered to the saints,” would by no means lead him to confine all the sweet charities of his religion to one sect or denomination. Some persons can see nothing good except in their own particular church. In this matter their views are very limited—like the “fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads an inch around!” If their church is prospering, they think that the millenium is just at hand! if their church is declining, they think, surely, all religion

is dying! This spirit is unworthy of an enlightened Christian. No! we like the man who has elevated and expanded views, who looks upon the Church of Christ as a fruit-bearing tree, that has many branches, each bearing at least some good fruit; or, like the grand army of patriots and volunteers in time of war—one army, and yet composed of different companies, and fighting under one and the same banner. If I ever were a bitter sectarian in my feelings, I have been cured, and the process was a simple one. I heard of a death: “How did the man die?” “O,” says the messenger, “I never witnessed such a death before! It really seemed as though the room was filled with the angels of God!” “Did he die in his senses?” “Perfectly in his senses.” “Did he speak?” “Yes, sir, and until his voice was lost in death!” “About what did he speak?” “About the blessed Jesus, sir. I heard him frequently say, ‘Precious Saviour! precious Saviour!’ and, just as he was breathing his last, he looked up, and, with a countenance radiant with joy, he exclaimed, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!’ Saying this, he closed his eyes, and his spirit took its upward flight.” “Well, truly, that was a happy death! And who was he?” “He was a *Presbyterian*.” Very well, and shall I not love those of my own communion, seeing God loves them? But I heard of another death. “How did he die?” “O, sir, it was truly a happy death.” “Did he speak?” “Yes, sir, and brought us all to tears.” “And what did he say?” “O, sir, he said a great many beautiful things; but his last words were these,



‘Jesus can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are.’”

“Well, that certainly was a happy death. And he was a Presbyterian—was he not?” “No, sir.” “Not a Presbyterian! What, then?” “He was a Baptist.” “A Baptist! Is it possible! Very well: be it so. If my Heavenly Father showers the roses of heaven upon the bed of the dying Baptist, and takes him as a child home to glory, this is my brother in Christ: I hope to meet him in heaven!” I heard of yet another death! “Was it happy?” “Most happy.” “Did he speak?” “Yes, sir, There were a great many in the room around his dying bed;—and he took each one by the hand, and gave the parting charge to meet him in heaven. All at once a sweet smile came over his countenance. He looked up, and seemed to be gazing with rapture upon some heavenly object, and exclaimed, ‘Glory! glory!’—and then we heard him in a whisper say, ‘Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!’ Saying this, his head sank upon the pillow; and we all remarked that we never saw a more lovely corpse.” “Certainly that was a happy death! Was he not a Presbyterian?” “No.” “Then surely he must have been a Baptist?” “No he was not!” “What then?” “He was a *Methodist*.” “A Methodist! Very well. If God accepts him, so will I. If my Heavenly Father sends down Elijah’s triumphant chariot to take this dying Methodist to heaven, he, also, is my brother; we are bought with the same precious blood; we are sanctified by the same Divine Spirit; we are members of the same household of faith; I hope to shake hands

with him in glory, and there unite with him in one sweet and everlasting song—‘the song of Moses and the Lamb!’ ‘Grace be with them all that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.’ ”

“The saints on earth, and all the dead,  
But one communion make ;  
All join in Christ, their living Head,  
And of his grace partake.”

“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report ; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Amen.”



## SERMON XI.

### A SERMON TO YOUNG MEN.

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind ; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts ; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee ; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.—1 CHRON. xxviii. 9.

THESE words form a part of David's farewell address, or dying charge to Solomon, his son, and heir of his throne. Notwithstanding his many and acknowledged faults, David was, upon the whole, both a great and a good man. He was a great man, for he had risen from obscurity to distinction ; from being a shepherd boy to be

a king, and a powerful one. But he was also a good man. Not to mention other things, the book of Psalms, chiefly penned by him, is a memorial to his praise; a monument more beautiful than marble, more enduring than brass. And what, my young friends, I wish you not to forget, is this, that he devoted the morning of his days, as well as all his subsequent life, to the service of his Maker. Yes, piety adorned his youth; it flourished in manhood; and was to him a crown of glory in his old age. And now, having reigned over Jerusalem forty years, and knowing that the time of his departure was near at hand, like Jacob, the venerable patriarch, and Moses, the saint of God, and Joshua, the son of Nun, he devotes the last closing scene of his life to the cause of piety and of God: and in his case emphatically, most lovely was the closing scene; lovelier far than the sunset scene at the close of the most placid day. See the mild, bright sun, sinking in the west, painting with rosy colors the fleecy clouds which, here and there, are seen reposing upon the bosom of the clear blue sky. It is a beautiful, a lovely sight, and one upon which the eye loves to linger; but the last, closing scene in the history of a good man, when his sun of life is sinking in mild splendor to rise in more effulgent glory in another and a better world, has a beauty and loveliness peculiarly its own. One has said,

“ The chamber where the good man meets his fate,  
Is privileged, beyond the common walks of virtuous life,  
Quite on the verge of heaven !”

Does he speak? Every eye is fixed; every ear is

attentive; all around are anxious to catch the last words which fall from his quivering lips; they are received as the counsels of wisdom and experience—almost as the voice of an oracle, or angel of God. But the case before us is invested with peculiar interest, for it is not only a good man that is about to leave the world, but it is a great man, a mighty man, a warrior, a conqueror, and a king. This is he, who, even when a youth, was more lauded than Saul, what time returning as the vanquisher of Goliath, he was met by those who, with the timbrel and the dance, uttered his praises, saying, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands!” Yes, it is the far renowned David, the king of Israel, that is about to sink into the cold embrace of death. After the example of other Old Testament worthies who had gone before him, he gives his farewell address, he gives his dying charge. Picture to yourself the scene; the chief men of Jerusalem, and the mighty men, and the princes of the blood are assembled in the palace of the dying monarch. There, on his royal couch, is the venerable man, with his cheeks furrowed, and his locks silvery with age! and there stands that young man, Solomon, the heir of David’s throne. What silence reigns! And now the king speaks; first he addresses the nobles of his court, giving them political counsel; and then he turns his eyes upon Solomon, and upon him, now, every eye is fixed. Solomon, with profound veneration waited to hear his father’s charge. It falls upon his ear: “And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,



for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever!" How unexpected is this language! How widely different from what the nobles around, and no doubt, from what Solomon himself anticipated. Certainly he will make a charge such as might be looked for from the mouth of a dying warrior and a king. No doubt he will speak after this fashion:—Solomon, your father rose from obscurity to distinction—from being a shepherd boy to be a king. Your father has fought many battles, achieved many victories; Solomon, you are to succeed your father upon the throne; cherish a martial spirit, push forward your victories, enlarge your dominions, twine laurels around your brow, and thus add new splendors to David's throne. No! not a word of this kind is uttered. What does he say? Let us hear it again: "And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off forever!" Ah! my young friends—ye young men whose hearts are set upon the world, and the things of the world; ye who are pressing after the riches of the world, and the honors of the world, and the pleasures of the world, here you may see how these things appear in a dying hour, how they are viewed even by a dying warrior and a king. Riches are nothing—honor, fame, all worldly splendor, all worldly glory—nothing. Religion

looms up then. The favor of God, that is everything; all else fades away like twinkling stars before the rising sun. And how was this great truth confirmed by Solomon himself, too, when the hour for his departure drew near. You recollect his language, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." And again: Let us hear, says he, the conclusion of the whole matter:—"Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man, for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing whether it be good or whether it be evil." Believe me, young men, the time is coming when these views will be our views. God grant we may all be prepared for that hour!

There are duties and considerations presented in our text, which claim the attention of all, but particularly of young men.

I. Duties.—They are expressed in these words: "My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind." First, "know thou the God of thy father." Taking it for granted that your parents are pious, see to it that you walk in their footsteps. The counsel of Eliphaz is good counsel: "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace with him, thereby good shall come unto you." Some of you doubtless, covet knowledge of some kind or other; some of you wish to know how you can get riches; how you can secure fame; how you can multiply friends; how you can enjoy and prolong life. Believe me, there is a kind of knowledge better than all this. "My son know thou the God of thy father." And why should you seek to

know him? Because he is the only living and true God. He is your Creator, the source of your being; he is your Preserver; his hand is underneath and around you; it is in him that you live, and move, and have your being. He is your Benefactor; to him you are indebted for every comfort, every enjoyment, every breath; and he is your final Judge—you and God must meet, and it would be well for you to know who he is, and what he is, before you are called into his presence. You should know him, not as your fancy portrays him, but as the Bible reveals him; as a God, not only good, but just; not only merciful, but holy; a God, not only long-suffering, but who will by no means clear the guilty: in short you are to know him in all the beauty, and harmony, and perfection of his whole character. O, think how great and glorious a being He is! and how happy are those who have him for their friend and protector! How happy are those who in the exercise of the spirit of adoption, can address him in this beautiful language: "Abba, Father!" and who, after contemplating his power and grandeur can say, with holy joy and exultation, "This God is our God, for ever and ever, He will be our guide, even unto death!" But, you are not only to know God; you are, secondly, to serve him. What avails knowledge if it does not prompt to obedience? You respect your father's friend, why not serve your father's God? Do you ask what you are to do? You are in the first place to give him your heart. This is expressly commanded, as it is written in the book of Proverbs, "My son, give me thine heart;" and this is implied in this language of our text, "serve him with a

perfect heart, and with a willing mind." Yes, your heart must be yielded up; "you must love the Lord your God with all your heart; you must love him more than you love father, or mother, or brother, or sister; more than you love your property, or your sins, or your life. Ah! this is the main thing required—the heart; the seat of the affections; let this be right, and all will be right; for love is an all controlling principle.

"'Tis love which makes our willing feet,  
In swift obedience move;  
The devils know and tremble too;  
But Satan cannot love."

But, just here, I wish to remind you of certain things which must not be forgotten. First: You must serve some master or other. "What," says the apostle, "know ye not that to whom ye yield ourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey?" And what says our Saviour? "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." My second remark is this: "You cannot serve two masters." This is what our Saviour also expressly affirms: "No man," says he, "can serve two masters." And again: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." These things being so, let it be remembered that the two masters who claim your service, are *God* and the *world*, and you must have one or the other; and, using the language of Joshua, I would say, "Choose you, this day, whom you will serve." Now, if this choice were left to your pious mother, or to your pious sister, or to the dying Christian, or to the heavenly ones in glory, the choice would soon be made, and I am sure it would be a



wise choice, and one which you would never regret. But no one is permitted to choose for you; each of you must make your own choice; and I would advise you to act discreetly in this matter, for the choice which you now make may be ratified in heaven, and settled upon you forever. Have you a regard for the matter of justice? I hope you have. Then, sit in judgment upon the claims of these two masters; whose claims are the best, God or the world? You know very well that the claims of your Maker are the best, infinitely the best. Then choose accordingly. And have you a regard for your own happiness? Then sit in judgment upon the character of these two masters—which is the best master? One is good, the other is bad. One is the very kindest of all masters. He will require nothing of you but what is perfectly reasonable; nothing but what is directly calculated to promote your best interests, and your true happiness; moreover, he will be kind to you in the hour of affliction, and will not forsake you in the hour of death: nay, more, he will, finally take you to heaven, and make you happy forever. With regard to the other master, the world, or the devil, is he a kind master? This master is of all others the worst. He is a cruel master, a tyrant! His requirements are oftentimes most unreasonable, and he cares not for the interest nor the happiness of his servants; not unfrequently he will require what is opposed to principle and conscience. I will give an example. Alexander Hamilton was challenged by Aaron Burr to fight a duel. This method of settling disputes was not in accordance with the feelings or judgment of General Hamilton; nay,

it was in direct opposition to his principles and conscience. He left this upon record. I have read what may be termed his written protest. The amount of what he wrote was this; that he did not approve of duelling, that it was abhorrent to all his feelings; that it was against his principles and conscience; but, he added, "the world expects it, the world demands it, and therefore I must accept the challenge." And he did accept it, and did fight; and sad to tell, he fell! was suddenly snatched from his family, and laid in an untimely grave. And now, listen to the colloquy between the master and the servant, in such a case. "Fight the duel," says his stern master. "It is against my conscience," replies the servant. "Who cares for your conscience? Fight the duel!" "Well, but my master, I have a lovely wife; she is the jewel of my heart; and if I should fall in single combat, she could not survive it, she would go down broken-hearted to the grave." "And what of that? Let your wife go down broken-hearted to the grave! Who cares for your wife? Fight the duel, I command you!" "But, my master, I have a number of dear children; they are young and tender, and as yet unprovided for; and if I should at this time be cut off, they may be thrown upon the cold charities of an unfeeling world; they may even become paupers, and how can I bear to think of the evil that must come upon them?" "Who cares for your children? what if they become paupers, and even vagabonds—who cares for that? Fight the duel I again command you!" "But, O my hard master, listen to me. My mother taught me, that after death comes the judg-

ment. I am not prepared to die, and if I should be slain in this combat, I fear that my poor soul may be lost, may be damned to all eternity." "And pray, who cares for your soul? who cares if your soul should be lost and damned to all eternity? I care not; that is a very small matter. Fight the duel, I command you!—fight the duel!" O what a cruel master this is! What a tyrant! He has no regard for your principles, or feelings, or conscience; no, nor even for the salvation of your soul. And is this the master of your choice? Are you willing to wear his iron yoke? Well, when you are crushed and ruined, whom will you have to blame, but yourself? O, how you will reproach yourself! How you will charge yourself with madness and folly, in rejecting the kindest of all masters, and preferring one who is a hard, unfeeling and cruel tyrant! Remember, if you make a bad choice, you yourself must suffer for it and I would now say to you, as Paul did to the Philippian jailor, who drew his sword and would have killed himself, "Do thyself no harm." "My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him." Take his yoke upon you, it is not galling, it is easy; take his burden upon you, it is not heavy, it is light. Yes, his service is a reasonable service, it is perfect freedom. This choice, you will never repent. Believe me, the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Believe me or rather believe Him who cannot lie—"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Have you made this choice in your own heart? Then, in the next place make an open

avowal, a public profession of it; yes, come out from the world, take your stand openly upon the Lord's side. Let your conduct speak this language,

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,  
Nor to defend his cause."

Have moral courage. Be willing that the whole world shall know that you are a Christian, that you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus; and that, God helping you, you are determined to serve him faithfully till you die. Consecrate to his service your time, your talents, your property, your influence, your all. Let your language be the language of the converted soul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And if any of you be called to serve him in the ministry of the word, yield promptly; yield cheerfully, and say with Isaiah, 'Here am I, Lord, send me.' But, if not called to preach the gospel, be sure, that in whatever station you may be placed, the full weight of your influence shall be on the side of religion and morality.

And here permit me to say a few things on the subject of temperance. In the present state of things it is called for. Young men, with your own eyes you have seen the evils of intemperance. Perhaps some of your own acquaintances; perhaps some of your own companions, have fallen victims to this vice. O, who can tell how great an evil it is! Who can tell what mischief it has done! We have heard of wars, which have laid cities in ashes, and kingdoms in ruins. We have heard of tornadoes, which have carried the ploughshare of destruction over the fairest portions of the earth. We have heard of



volcanic irruptions rolling lava far and wide. We have heard of mighty earthquakes, which in one disastrous hour have swallowed up thousands and tens of thousands in one wide, yawning terrific grave!—I have heard of many such things; but here is one, perhaps more ruinous to man and his best interests than all such put together. For, whereas other evils chiefly affect the body, this reaches the soul; and whereas other evils are confined to times and places, this sweeps over the whole world, as some sirocco of the desert, or some blast from the pit! Like Death upon the pale horse, it sends a thrill of horror wherever it goes. It curses men, and curses women. It withers everything that is beautiful, and blasts everything that is good. Poverty, and disease, and strife, and violence, and murder, are in its train; and death and hell wind up the fearful escort. Young men, let the temperance banner wave over you! Be its unflinching advocate—be its fast friend. Never traffic in ardent spirits; and rather die than “deal out death by the half-pint.” O, what a meeting there will be between the rumseller and his victim in the resurrection morn! A Boston poet has been very graphic here:

“One was the drunkard, early dead,  
 The other, he who hurled him to the grave!  
 As the grave raised its rattling shroud, and  
 Let their bodies forth, clothed, both with dismal  
 Immortality—the drunkard started,  
 As he slowly turned, and fix his horrid eyes  
 On him who shrank from that look of death,  
 And sprang to seek his hiding tomb. Moaning  
 He said—‘Spirit! why gaze on me? Who art  
 Thou? Knowest thou me?’ ‘Know thee?’ loud shrieks  
 Replied: ‘Know I this judgment morn? Know I

The threat to meet thee here again? Stand forth!  
Thou doomed, unconcerned fiend! Aye, well I know  
Thee! Well I knew on earth, thy damning arts  
That lured me to the grave! Stand forth! and look  
On yonder flowery spot, whence rose to heaven  
My angel wife and babes, and read the  
Inscription on their tombs, and mine! I am  
The murdered man thou sawest die, and thou,  
My murderer; the monster seller of that  
Ardent fire that burned my body, and now  
Burns my soul! But, hark! the judgment-trumpet  
Calls! and we must meet the Judge! I told thee  
So, when dying on my bed of straw, in  
Yonder world. Away! Away! for still the  
Trumpet calls! It calls for thee, thou murderer!  
And I will be a witness at the bar,  
And call on God to damn thy soul and mine!"

Young men, you must exert a great influence in your day and generation, for good or evil. Remember, there are two great interests set up on earth, and they are antagonistical. O, see to it, that the full weight of your influence be on the right side. Be bold in your opposition to everything that is evil, and demoralizing; be valiant for the truth; "serve the God of your fathers with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind." Tell me not, that zeal in the cause of virtue, of religion, and of God, will interfere with your other engagements or lawful callings in life. By no means will it. You may have the plough, or the pen, or even the sword, in your hand, and God in your heart at the same time. In every calling, in every profession, in every pursuit of life, you may find illustrations of the fact, that piety and the lawful pursuits of life, are by no means incompatible with each other. Do you wish to be a lawyer? Be it so. Seldon was a lawyer and Seldon was a very pious man. Do you covet

the office of a judge? Very well. Sir Matthew Hale was a judge, and Sir Matthew Hale was a most devoted Christian. Do you desire to be a physician? Be it so. Boerhaave was a physician, and no one questions his piety. Would you be a merchant? Divie Bethune was a merchant, and so was Robert Ralston, and who knows not that their praise is in all the churches? But you must be a mechanic. Be it so; that is an honorable calling; Harlan Page was a mechanic, and Harlan Page had many converted by his instrumentality, to rise up and call him blessed. And should you even wish to be a soldier—be it so. At the call of your country, buckle on your armor. Go forth and meet the invading foe. Yes, at the call of your country, be a soldier. Cornelius was a soldier, and so was our own beloved Washington. The apostle says, “Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.” The idea is this, that *duties never clash*. You can be a zealous, warm-hearted Christian, and at the same time be active and enterprising in all the lawful callings and pursuits of life. Indeed, he who professes to be a Christian, and neglects his temporal duties, dishonors the name of Christ; hence the language of the apostle, “He that provides not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;” and the rule laid down, which embraces all duties, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, is this: “Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave to which thou goest.” Yes, in relation to everything which claims your attention,

be active and diligent, remembering the words of our blessed Redeemer, "The night cometh when no man can work." But, as we have said, our text embraces,

II. Considerations which are worthy of the attention of all, but particularly of young men. The first is expressed in these words: "The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." The idea is this, that the eye of God is upon you; that he knows not only all your actions, but all your thoughts. He is with you at all times, by night and by day, at home and abroad, and is perfectly acquainted with your whole character; you are ever in his immediate presence, and have to say, with Hagar in the wilderness, "Thou, God, seest me!" What a powerful consideration this is to hold the sinner in check, and make him anxious, neither to do, or say, or think anything that is wrong. "Thou, God, seest, me!" The bare thought of it is enough to make the dagger to fall from the hand of the assassin. The bare thought of it is enough to cause the cup to fall from the hand of the inebriate; and enough also, to cause the oath to die half uttered upon the tongue. O remember, young man, that you can hide nothing from your Maker, that every sin you commit is known and registered, and that the day of review must come! The second consideration is this: "If thou seek him, he will be found of thee." O, if you only knew what is implied in finding God! if you only knew how rich and happy this would make you! Count up all the silver and the gold in this wide world; add every diamond and every pearl; add all the kingdoms on earth, and the glory of them, and



what is all this to the favor of God! The favor of God!—it is everything which men on earth, or angels in heaven can desire; hence the language of the Psalmist: “Thy favor, O God, is life; thy loving kindness is better than life.” This is the prize presented, and how is it to be obtained? By seeking. “If thou seek him, he will be found of thee.” If some one, in whom you have confidence, should tell you that there is a jewel hid in the sand near your dwelling, which is worth one hundred thousand dollars, and that if you seek it you shall find it, and finding it, it shall be yours; would you not seek it? Aye, would you not immediately enter upon the work of seeking it? Would you not seek it by sun-light, and star-light? by moon-light, and torch-light? and would you not seek it with all your heart? with unwearied perseverance, and with a settled determination never to give over, but to seek until you should find it. Now, this is the promise made, this is the assurance given in relation to the one pearl of great price, “If thou seek him, he will be found of thee.” And now, if you wish to find the eternal God, as the rest and portion of your soul: if you wish to repose in his bosom, and share in his everlasting love, you must seek him as directed—“Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near.”

But, in this matter there are certain things which must not be forgotten:—1. You are to seek the Lord while you are yet in the morning of life. Few persons, comparatively speaking, are converted after they are thirty years of age. The season of youth, ah! that is the golden

season, the best season; hence this special command given, "Remember, now, thy Creator in the days of thy youth;" and, also, this special promise, which we find upon sacred record, "They that seek me early shall find me." 2. You are to seek the Lord, in the forsaking of all our sins, as it is written, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Yes, this is a settled point; you are to give up all your sins, even your most loved and besetting sin. Though dear as a right hand, you must cut it off: though dear as a right eye, you must pluck it out. The sacrifice may be esteemed great, but it must be made, for the Psalmist says: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;" and if you indulge in one single sin, even in your heart, why should he hear you? Remember, you cannot be earthly-minded and heavenly-minded at the same time. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." This leads me to a third remark:—You must seek the Lord, earnestly; you must seek him with all your heart, even as the hungry man seeks bread, the thirsty man seeks water, or as the ambitious man seeks fame. Your whole soul must be in the matter. You must feel that everything that is dear is at stake—that, if you succeed, you are happy forever; if you succeed not, you are undone to all eternity. O, then, let this be with you the great concern, to seek and find God, as your supreme good, and the portion of your soul. And for your encouragement, remember it is written, "Then shall ye seek me, and find me, when you

search for me with all your heart." Take God at his word. Believe the promise, and your salvation is sure. Your sins will be pardoned; God will be your Father, and heaven your sweet and everlasting home!

But a third consideration, or motive, presented in our text, is expressed in these emphatic words: "But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." Here we have, as it were, the mutterings of the thunders of the last day. The language is awful: how does it fall upon your ear? Listen! "But, if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever." My young friends, suppose your parents should cast you off; suppose your brothers and sisters should cast you off; suppose your friends and neighbors—suppose the whole world should cast you off, would you not esteem yourselves wretched? Let my father and my mother cast me off; let my brothers and my sisters cast me off; let my friends, and my neighbors—let all the world cast me off—but, O God of my salvation, do not thou cast me off! for, if driven from thy presence, whither, O whither shall I go? Permit me to remark, that when I was quite a youth, one of Watts' hymns made a very deep and lasting impression upon my mind, particularly these lines:

"That awful day will surely come,  
The appointed hour makes haste,  
When I must stand before my Judge,  
And pass the solemn test.

Thou lovely Chief of all my joys,  
Thou Sovereign of my heart,  
How could I bear to hear thy voice,  
Pronounce the word, DEPART.

The thunder of that dismal word  
Would so torment my ear,  
'Twould tear my soul asunder, Lord,  
With most tormenting fear,

What ! to be banished from my Life,  
And yet forbid to die ?  
To linger in eternal pain,  
And death forever fly ?”

These lines came over my soul with a most awakening influence—with a most tremendous power ; but the following verse crowned the whole :

“ O ! wretched state of deep despair,  
To see my God remove,  
And fix my doleful station, where  
I must not taste his love !”

The scenes of the last great day were brought vividly before the eyes of my mind. There was the Judge enthroned—there the vast multitude of the human family assembled—the righteous on the right hand, the wicked on the left ; and a great gulf between. Amongst the happy ones, I pictured to myself many of my dearest relatives, and above all, my sainted mother ! The Judge smiles upon them, but there was no smile for me. I must depart ! Cut off from God, and his angels, and all whom I loved on earth, I must take an everlasting farewell. Driven away, I must wander down the vale of an unblest eternity—a wretched, hopeless exile from God, and happiness, and heaven. O, ye dear youth, who have been blessed with pious parents, who have been early taught the great truths of our holy religion, how could you bear



to see your "God remove?" How can you endure the thought of having your doleful station fixed where you "must not taste his love?" Never, no, never, never more! O eternity! eternity! To be exiled from God, and happiness, and heaven, for a million of years—how overwhelming the thought! But, O, forever! "Who can paraphrase," (as a poor dying sinner said,) "who can paraphrase upon the words, forever and forever!" My young friends, remember, great eternity is before you, and what you do this night may stamp your character, and fix your destiny forever! You may try to hide these things from your eyes, you may try to forget them altogether; but this will avail nothing. God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world; yea, even the secrets of all hearts. Amid the scenes of youth, and the pursuits and pleasures of this life, you may perhaps enjoy yourselves, and get along without God and religion; but what will you do when the evil days shall come, and the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them. In the morning of life, when everything is smiling around you, it is quite possible that you may have something like joy playing around your heart; but what will you do in the day when the sun, or the light, or the moon be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain? You may get along without God, it may be, when you are yet young, and everything is smiling upon you; what will you do when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened? You may

get along without God, it may be, when you are yet young, and everything is smiling around you; but what will you do in the day when you shall be afraid of that which is high; and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets? You may get along without God, and religion, perchance, while you are yet young, and everything is smiling around you; but what will you do in the day when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl shall be broken; in the day when the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern, in the day when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it? Young men, listen to me: this world has a powerful charm for many, and especially for the young; the influence which it exerts over multitudes is truly astonishing; and after all, what is the world, but a "land of unsubstantial shades?" and what are things of the world but "an empty, though brilliant show?" So teaches Solomon—"Vanity of vanities," says he, "all is vanity." Observe, this is not the language of poverty-stricken man, who, under the influence of envious feelings, cries down those things which he possesses not. Nor is it the longing of a carping cynic, who, soured by disappointment, would retire from the world in disgust. No, nor is it the language of a man who utters in a moment of excitement that which he would fain recall in the season of calm reflection. It is the language of a man famed for his riches,

and wisdom, and prosperity. It is the language of Solomon, the son of David, and king of Israel. No man probably, that ever lived, was better qualified to form a correct estimate of the world and the things of the world, for, it seems, there was no source of worldly enjoyment to which he had not repaired in his pursuit after happiness, and here he gives the result of his long continued observation, the verdict of his own dear bought experience—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Notice, Solomon does not affirm, that some earthly things are vain, but all—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Not that Solomon intended to say, that literally there is nothing good or desirable on earth. His idea is this: as the supreme good, or portion of the soul, everything of an earthly nature is weighed and found wanting. This falls in with the language of the poet :

"The world can never give,  
The bliss for which we sigh."

And if I mistake not, this falls in also with the experience of the gayest of the gay, now present. Ah! believe me, "There is nothing true, there is nothing firm, there is nothing sweet but heaven!" O, my young friends, in view of all these things, be persuaded to seek something better than this world can give. The world! how vain will it appear when you are sinking in the cold embrace of death! The world! what a poor thing, what a beggarly portion, when it shall be wrapped in the winding-sheet of the last great conflagration: and oh! how utterly unworthy of the aspirations of an immortal mind, must all

its riches, and honors, and splendors this moment appear to those bright spirits who are now high in the climes of bliss, and bathing in glory, as in the sunlight of heaven! Therefore, young men, listen, oh listen, I again entreat you, to the language of the text; it was the dying charge of a father to a son whom he loved; and it may in substance be the charge given to some of you, by some beloved parent, now gone to glory! O hear it, as the counsel of experience and love! O receive it as the voice of an oracle, or angel of God:—"My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but, if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

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## SERMON XII.

### THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude; and as the voice of many waters; and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."—Rev. xix. 6.

THAT there is a God, all nature cries aloud, through all her works; and the religious rites and ceremonies which prevail on earth, plainly declare the general belief, that this great Being has not retired from the scene of his creating power, but still, as a sovereign God, presides over the world and the creatures which he has made. Of



the true nature and character of this government, however, little can be gathered from the light of reason, and the researches of the learned. To obtain clear and correct information upon this point, we must have recourse to the sacred volume, and, such are the views which it presents of the Divine government, that, in the contemplation of them, we shall find abundant matter for the loud and harmonious shout in the heavenly world:—"Allelulia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" According to the Scriptures, the government of God is *unique*, for, whereas the right of earthly monarchs to reign is founded, sometimes in conquest, sometimes in the elective franchise, and sometimes in hereditary claim; the government of God is founded in none of these things, but in principles infinitely more sublime. It is founded,

I. In Creation.—He who, on earth, has founded an empire, is thought to have a right to rule the empire which he has founded. Now, God having created all things; having brought all things out of nothing into existence, has, in the sublimest sense of the term, founded the empire of the universe; and, therefore, has an undoubted right to reign over the empire which he has thus founded. Hence the language of the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." And again: "O, come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. He made us, and not we ourselves; we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

II. In Preservation.—He, who originally created, still sustains all things. The whole universe rests upon his hand, and should this great Being, only for a moment, withdraw his upholding hand, the pillars of the universe would sink; the whole frame of nature would be dissolved; yea, all created existence would immediately vanish away, and leave nothing behind save the throne of God, and a boundless solitude! As all things, then, depend upon God, for their continued, as well as original existence, here of course is another firm foundation upon which the government of God is rightly based.

III. In the Perfections of God.—Certainly, it is right and proper that he should hold the reins of government who is best qualified to rule: especially where such immense interests are at stake. And here we may ask, with the Psalmist: “Who, in the heavens, is like unto the Lord our God? and who, in all the earth, can be compared unto Him?” Is *wisdom* requisite to manage the complicated affairs of this vast universe? God is infinite in wisdom. Is *goodness* necessary? God is supremely, unchangeably, and everlastingly good. Is *power* requisite? “The thunder of his power who can understand?” But, why speak we of single perfections? God, as one well remarks, is

“A God all o’er consummate, absolute;  
Full orb’d; in his whole round of rays complete.”

No wonder, then, that the exile of Patmos, caught up in the visions of God, “heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude; and as the voice of many waters; and as

the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Allelulia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" The immediate occasion of this great shout in heaven seems to be the fall of mystical Babylon, or Papal Rome; but, no doubt, every new developement of Divine Providence will renew the shout, through all the ages and cycles of great eternity! That we may better understand the subject, and also be prepared to respond to the loud and rapturous shout in glory, "Allelulia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," let us notice some of the distinguishing features or characteristics, of the government of God. And,

1. It is supreme and universal.—The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, says the Psalmist, and his kingdom ruleth over all. There are many governments on earth; and, doubtless, there are many thrones and principalities in the other worlds, but the throne of God is high over them all! Alexander the Great was called master of the world, but there were many regions of the earth over which his sceptre was never stretched, and there were many people of whom he had even never heard. And even within the limits of his acknowledged empire, how many kings disdained his control! Not to mention the lions of the forest, and the leviathans of the deep, could Alexander the Great rule the changing seasons? Could he command the lightning? or the rain? or the hail? or the storm? Alexander's kingdom was extensive, but not to be compared with the kingdom of the God of heaven. Alexander ruled over many kings, but God *over all*! Yes, God hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and, literally, his kingdom ruleth over all! over all men,

over all worlds, over all creatures, in the broadest, sublimest sense, *over all!* But

2. The government of God is not only supreme and universal, it is particular.—It not only extends to great, but to small objects; not only to the mighty whole but to every part! Yes, whilst his power and his wisdom are employed in upholding and directing the “hosts of suns, and stars, and adamantine spheres, wheeling unshaken amid the void immense,” his wisdom and his goodness are engaged in directing and controlling all things on earth, from the revolution of an empire to the falling of a sparrow. It is even so! He that garnishes the heavens also beautifies the earth. He that numbers the stars, and calls them by their names, also numbers the dew-drops of the morning, and the sands upon the sea-shore! That hand which bears up the mighty seraph, sustains the meanest insect, and He who bids the roaring tempest sweep the earth, directs the breathing of the softest zephyr! Stagger not at this! for “as one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” so an atom is with God as a world, and a world as an atom! As immensity cannot confound him, so minuteness cannot escape him! The fact is, with God there is nothing great! With God there is nothing small! Some persons admit the general government of God, but deny his particular providence. The idea is absurd; for what, if I should say of a physician, he has a general practice, but no particular patient! or of a scholar, he is a man of very general reading, but he never reads any one book! But what says the Saviour on this subject? It is striking, it



is conclusive. "Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing, and not one of them shall fall without your Father? Fear not, the very hairs of your head are all numbered!" How small is the sparrow in the lone wilderness! and how insignificant is the single hair which has fallen from your head! And yet, according to the Saviour, even such things are not overlooked in the providence of God! And what is taught as true, in the word of God, is shown to be necessarily true also by reason—for we find that in the world of nature, providence, and of grace; in all the departments of the Divine government, we find that great matters and little matters are oftentimes linked together; and who does not know that in a chain stretched across a river, the breaking of a small link may prove as serious a matter as the breaking of a great link! How many striking illustrations of this fact have we in history, in observation, and experience! The cackling of geese once saved the city of Rome from the power of the Gauls. Joseph's coat of many colors was one link in a chain of most surprising events! A single playful remark of Francis the First, occasioned a bloody war between France and England. The carving of a few letters in the bark of a tree, led to the noble invention of printing! And, to the apparently accidental falling of an apple, we are indebted for some of Sir Isaac Newton's sublimest demonstrations in natural science; and who of us need to be reminded of the tremendous consequences of our first parents' eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree?

“—— her rash hand in evil hour  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat!  
Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,  
That all was lost!”

And cannot every one of us recollect some little remark, or incident, which has led to most important changes in our lines and circumstances? In the case of Joseph—his coat of many colors, his dreams, the envy of his brethren, his being sold into Egypt, his being falsely accused, his being cast into prison, his interpreting the dreams of the chief baker and butler, and also the dreams of Pharoah and Joseph’s interpretation of them, and the advancement of Joseph to be governor over all the land of Egypt, and finally, the settlement of Jacob and all his family in the land of Goshen—here are many things, some small, some great, linked together. Each event seemed to be casual, each actor free; and had the narrative been given by one of that age, he would very naturally have said: “It happened so;” and “it happened so”—and yet, if one of these things which “happened” had not happened, then, perhaps, the grand result would not have taken place! But this leads me to speak of another distinguishing feature, a characteristic of the Divine government.

3. The government of God extends, not only to all things, but to all events; not only to all creatures, but to all their actions. I am aware that we are here launching into the deep; but the Bible is our chart. It is a good chart, and we need fear nothing.

Reader, I am a Calvinist, so called ; not that I embrace all the dogmas of the great Genevan divine, but certainly those that are embraced in the standards of our Church ; and the longer I live, and the more carefully I examine the subject, the more thoroughly convinced am I, that the system usually termed Calvinistic, is firmly based upon the Bible, and will stand the "test of scrutiny, of talents, and of time." Nay, I will go further, and say that the system needs only to be correctly understood by all the true people of God, to be received and loved. I repeat it, I am a *Calvinist*, but I am no *fatalist* ! I hold to the sovereignty of God, and also to the free-agency of man, and whilst I believe that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, yet it is in such a way as "thereby neither is God the author of sin ; nor is violence done to the freedom of the creature ; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." It may not be possible for me to discriminate between the human and the divine agency ; nor can I tell where one color in the rainbow terminates, and where another begins ; yet do I know that these colors are different, and both in the rainbow. I may not be able to reconcile the free-agency of man with the foreknowledge of God, which all must believe ; suffice it to know that both doctrines are taught in the Bible, and I know that the Bible is true. Do I trample upon reason ? I deny it. I have a syllogism—it is this : My heavenly Father says that these doctrines are all true. My heavenly Father never tells lies, and therefore these doctrines are all true ! But can they ever be reconciled or

explained? I believe they both can and will be, when God gives the key. Suppose, for a moment, that you were totally unacquainted with your twofold existence, as consisting of soul and body. Now, whilst believing yourself to be a simple, and not a compound being, suppose I should say: "You are a mortal man, and must soon die;" and the next moment should pronounce you an immortal being, and affirm that you can never die, but must live forever! Would you not say that I spoke very absurdly, and used very contradictory language? But, should I add, wait a little, and you will have the key, and then all will be plain, and you will see that all is true, and there is no absurdity; no contradiction whatever; methinks you would reply, "No, sir, no key will answer, none can reconcile things so perfectly contradictory; 'mortal,' and yet at the same time 'immortal;' must die! and yet will not, cannot die! The thing is absurd, it cannot be!" But when you are let into the secret of your twofold nature—O, now! there is no difficulty at all! Even so, in relation the sovereignty of God, and the free-agency of man, we find it difficult to reconcile these things now, because the key is wanting. In a future state the key will be given, and then there will be no difficulty at all. In the mean time let us remember that the Bible is suited to our probationary state. We need our faith tried, as well as any other grace, or virtue. And now our grand inquiry is, What does the Bible teach? for

"This is the judge that ends the strife,

Where wit and reason fail;

My guide to everlasting life,

Through all this gloomy vale."



That the government of God extends, not only to all things but to all events; not only to all creatures, but to all their actions. In other words, that the providence of God is, in some way or other, concerned with all that is done or transpires on earth, is manifested from very many passages of Scripture. The strongest, I think, are those which assert the providence of God in cases where, least of all, it might have been expected.

Thus, in the 127th Psalm we find it thus written: "Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." And again, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." But there is another passage of Scripture, perhaps, yet more remarkable; inasmuch as it asserts the providence and purpose of God in a case involving sin, dreadful sin! The passage referred to is found in Acts ii. 23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." The crucifixion of Christ, by envious and wicked Jews, was certainly a crime of great magnitude; and yet the apostle Peter tells us expressly that it was "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The explanation of the matter is simply this: God knowing all things, foreknew what evil passions would be waked up in the bosom of the Jews by the life, and doctrines, and reproofs of our Saviour, and he also knew full well to what a murderous deed those evil passions would lead, if not restrained. For wise and benevolent purposes towards our race, God determined not to restrain those evil passions, but to leave

the Jews (as of course he justly might) to the freedom of their own will—leave them to act out their own will—leave them to act out their own depravity; purposing as I have said, to overrule the whole matter to the accomplishment of great ends. God was certainly under no obligation to exercise a restraining influence upon those wicked Jews; and if he foreknew what crime they unrestrained would commit, his “foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, which had proved no less certain unforeknown;” hence the apostle Peter, at the very time that he speaks of the crucifixion of Christ as being according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, nevertheless, charges home all the guilt thereof, upon the wicked Jews. Observe his language! “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” The case of Joseph, also, is precisely in point. He was hated by his brethren, and by them sold into Egypt. This was a great sin; and afterwards, when in trouble, they freely confessed it “And they said, one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress upon us. And Reuben answered, saying: Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear; therefore, behold also, his blood is required.” Thus, all who had a hand in selling Joseph, acknowledged and felt that they had acted freely, and they writhed under the stings of an accusing conscience. Yet, when Joseph made himself

known unto them, and they were greatly troubled at his presence, what said Joseph unto them? "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive." There needs be no difficulty. The case is simply this. God, being infinitely wise, knows how, in perfect consistency with the perfections of his character, to make use of all instrumentalities, good and bad, for the accomplishment of his wise and benevolent purposes. Certain things God *brings to pass* by a positive agency. Other things he *simply permits* to come to pass. And, let it be remarked, permission and approbation do not, by any means, mean the same thing. Napoleon Bonaparte, when a child, wished to go to a certain place, but was forbidden by his mother. Being headstrong, he persisted in going. "Well, my son," said the mother, "you may go, but remember! it is not with your mother's approbation." And thus God oftentimes permits things which, so far from commanding, he forbids, and highly disapproves. He permits, sometimes, because he would not interfere with the free-agency of the creature. He permits, sometimes, because he purposes (as in the cases already mentioned) to overrule the evil intended for good; and sometimes he permits, in a judicial way, as a punishment for sins previously committed. Hence the language of Paul in reference to the heathen and their abominations: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them

over to do things which are not convenient." And now let it not be forgotten, this is all that is meant by a certain passage in our Shorter Catechism, which has been much cavilled at, viz: "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." In other words, it may be stated thus:—By the decrees of God we mean no formal legislative enactment, (as, "Thus it shall be," and "thus it shall not be,") but, simply the calm and settled purpose of an infinitely wise and gracious God, to bring to pass, or permit to come to pass, whatsoever does come to pass, for the glory of his name. Does any one ask, what is the difference between *bringing* to pass, and *permitting* to come to pass? I answer, God brought to pass the incarnation of his Son; he permitted to come to pass his crucifixion. The difference is as wide as the east is from the west. Our doctrine, then, is simply this:—By positive and permissive decrees, God, in wisdom and in love, manages the affairs of the universe, directs and controls all things, and all events, all creatures, and all their action. It must be so, for, suppose an event to take place without the Divine permission; because God is not aware of it, or cannot prevent it. If not aware of it, he cannot be omniscient; if he cannot prevent it, then he is not omnipotent; and then, of course, in the last case, "there must be a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself," which thought would be frightful! No, our doctrine is true, that the government of God extends not only to all things, but to all events, not only to



all creatures, but to all their actions. In other words that a Divine providence is concerned, in some way or other, "in all the good and ill that checker human life." Is further proof demanded? Permit me to quote a very remarkable passage found in Isaiah xlv. 7: "I form the light, and I create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." What! the Lord create *evil*? Yes! but in such a way as casts no stain upon his moral perfections; but, on the contrary, will furnish new matter for admiration and praise. Hence the language of joy and gratulation which immediately follows:—"Drop down, ye heavens, from above! and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation. Let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord, have created it." But how does God create evil? As he does darkness. The first sentence explains the last. Observe the language: I form the light and I create darkness. How does God form the light? By a positive influence, pouring radiance around. How does God create darkness? By withholding this radiance. Even so, by a positive influence, God makes peace, and by withholding that influence creates evil, that is, permits it. In this, is God the author of sin? No more than the sun is the source of darkness, although its absence occasions that darkness. But this leads me to notice another distinguishing feature, or characteristic of the government of God.

4. It is absolute.—There is no doctrine more plainly, taught in the Scriptures than this. "Our God is in the heavens," says the Psalmist, "he hath done whatsoever

he pleased." And again: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he, in heaven and in earth; in the seas and in all deep places." Paul confirming the doctrine, positively asserts that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. And Elihu, knowing that some would be disposed to contend against the doctrine, says: "Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." As God is indebted to none for his crown, He is amenable to none for his government. Being the Creator and Preserver of all things, he is, in the sublimest sense of the term, the proprietor of all things; and, therefore, has a right to do all his pleasure, in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; and being infinitely perfect, it should be a matter of boundless joy and gratulation, that he is, and ever will be, the reigning God! He giveth not account of any of his matters, and why? Because the policy of his government, and his reasons of state cannot be comprehended by any finite mind. Sufficient for us to know, that He is infinitely wise and good, and does all things well. As a sovereign God he gives and withholds the fruits of the earth, and the rains of heaven. As a sovereign God he commands the hail and the tempest; the lightning and the storm; and, at his command, also, fierce diseases go and come. Yes, when it seems good in his sight,

"—— He involves the heaven  
In tempest! quits his grasp upon the winds,  
And gives them all their fury, bids the plague  
Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,

And putrefy the breath of blooming youth !  
He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend  
Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,  
And taints the golden ear !”

The Lord, says Hannah, in her song of thankfulness, “The Lord maketh poor and maketh rich. He bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth the poor up out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory! for the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and he hath set the world upon them.” The idea is this. The Lord is the proprietor of all things, and therefore a sovereign God! Yes, my reader, as a sovereign God, he has not only fixed the bounds of the sea, but he has also fixed the bounds of our habitations; the bounds of our possessions, the bounds of our lives. All things are under the control of a wise and powerful God! If, then, some are rich and some are poor, some are honored and some despised; if some have great prosperity, and some have great affliction; if this child is an idiot, and that has good sense; if this child is born a cripple, and that in the full exercise of all its limbs, it is, “Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.” And this reminds me of the case of the poor little mute in one of our Institutions for the deaf and dumb: “Child,” said a visitor (the conversation was in writing,) “child, can you tell me who made the world?” “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” replied the mute. “Very well, and can you tell me who Jesus Christ is?” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God," was another beautiful answer of the mute. "All very good," said the gentleman, "and now, one question more. Can you tell me, child, how it comes to pass that you are deaf and dumb when others can both hear and speak?" "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," replied the child with great meekness. Where did this child of affliction learn this lesson? At the feet of the blessed Jesus. You recollect the Saviour had sent out his disciples, two and two, to preach the gospel, and when they returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," it is added, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Our Saviour, when on earth, often wept, but so far as I can recollect, only on this occasion, is he said to have rejoiced. And in what did he rejoice? In the sovereignty of God! "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." This is the more remarkable as it has reference to the sovereignty of God exercised in spiritual matters, in giving to some what was hidden from others. And we find the same spirit animating Paul, and in relation to the same matter. Hear his own words: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as



he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The doctrine of God's sovereign and electing love is here plainly taught. And observe it is not a *national* election that is spoken of, for Paul says, Who hath chosen us? Not *us Gentiles*, for Paul was not a Gentile, nor *us Jews*, for the Ephesians were not Jews. If we were addressing a company of Africans, we would not say, *us Africans*. We are not Africans, nor could we say, *us Americans*, for they are not Americans. No national election can then here be intended, nor the election of characters, for those said to be chosen in Christ, were not said to be chosen in Christ because they were holy, but that they should be holy. And this reminds me of a passage in the Acts. Luke says: "And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." If the election of characters and not persons be intended, Luke made a slip of the pen, and should have said, As many as *believed* were *ordained* unto eternal life. But no! this is the way it is written, "And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." But, as Paul, in the passage quoted, has no reference to a national, nor election of characters, neither does he here offer reference to the apostleship of anything of the kind, for the persons to whom the epistle was addressed, were simply "the saints at Ephesus," and

"the faithful in Christ Jesus;" besides, it is expressly stated that they were chosen, not to the apostleship, nor anything of the kind, but to the adoption of children. Some object to the doctrine of election. Is it the *word*? It is in the Bible, in numerous places, and cannot be expunged. Is it the *principle*? You elect your governors, your presidents, your judges, your sheriffs, your pastors, your partners in love and trade. No principle more common amongst men: we should not marvel, therefore, if it be common with God. Do men set a value upon the exercise of the principle? Go to the ballot-box, and tell that free-born American that he shall not exercise the elective franchise! He will surrender his life, before he surrenders that right! If, then, man sets a value upon the *principle*, why may not his Maker? But, is the doctrine of personal election objected to? And what is this doctrine? I would define it thus:—It is God's plan of securing the salvation of some, of a great multitude which no man can number! Now, why should we object to a plan for securing the salvation of a great multitude of the human family, which no man can number, when, without it, the salvation of all would be in jeopardy?

And here I am reminded of the remark of a certain very pious old lady. When asked whether she believed in the doctrine of election, "Certainly," replied she, "for it is in the Bible." "What!" said the inquirer, "do you believe that you were elected before you were born?" "Yes," said she promptly, "I have been such a poor vile sinner, if God had not elected me before I was born, he never would afterwards." This remark, if I mistake not,

must be understood and appreciated by all who know anything of their own hearts, and have felt the power of God's victorious grace. And here permit me to remark, that the doctrine of election was designed for the consolation of God's children; and I would appeal to the feelings of every real Christian. Is it not more delightful to think that God set his love upon us from all eternity, than that he began to love us the other day? And what is so cheering to the child of God, need not be discouraging to the unconverted, for they have the same encouragement to seek salvation now, that the Christian had before he was converted. And the fact is, the grand inquiry is, not whether we can understand every part of the scheme of redemption, but whether there is such a scheme whereby the sinner may be saved. Not whether two or three doctrines in the Bible are hard to be understood, but whether the Bible itself, which contains these doctrines, be the word of God. Not whether we are of the elect or reprobate, but whether we are sinners, and need the salvation of Christ; for it is very remarkable, the same Bible which tells us that "whom God foreknew, them he also predestinated," also says, "whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And again: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Thus there are two classes of Scripture passages, and we believe them both. And as I have said before, so say I again, there is no more difficulty in reconciling the fore-ordination, than the fore-knowledge of God with the free-agency of man, so that Christians of different persuasions should

be very kind and charitable towards each other, inasmuch as (so far as regards the matter of difficulty) they are all in the same condemnation; and one thing is certain, if the system called "Calvinistic" be not scriptural, it looks very much like it. To prove this matter let us try it in this way. Suppose that the apostle Paul should enter the sacred desk, disguised as a preacher, and looking over the congregation, should break out in these words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Would you not suspect that this stranger was a Calvinistic preacher? And suppose, waxing a little warmer, he should go on and say: "Moreover, whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us." Would you not think the preacher strongly Calvinistic? And suppose, waxing still warmer, and rising with the grandeur of the theme, he should add: "The Lord hath made all things to himself, even the wicked for the day of evil: therefore, hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt,



then, say unto me, Wherefore doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Suppose, I say, the apostle Paul, disguised as a preacher, should utter these "hard sayings," would you not pronounce him a Calvinistic preacher of the "straitest sect?" Ah! my reader, the case is clear. According to the Scriptures, God is a sovereign God, and doth his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and there is none that can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou? As an absolute sovereign, he rules over all the worlds of nature, and of grace; and if one person is prospered, and another afflicted; if one is born in a gospel, and another in a pagan land; if one lives to an old age, and another is cut down in youth, or early childhood; and if one is converted and made the trophy of victorious grace, and another is permitted to go on in sin, and perish in sin, it is "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"Nor Gabriel asks the reason why,  
Nor God the reason gives!"

But, 5. The last distinguishing feature, or characteristic of the Divine government, is this: It is wise and good—infininitely wise and good! If a being clothed with such tremendous power—O! if a being invested

with such absolute dominion over all things, were capricious or malignant; if he took pleasure in inflicting pain, or delighted in the death of any of his creatures, how frightful would be the condition of the universe! But joy, joy to creation; this great Being, this sovereign God, is no less wise than he is powerful; no less good than he is great! It is true, that there are mysteries in Divine government; and not unfrequently the paths of the Almighty are in the deep waters, and his ways past finding out. It is because God works upon a large pattern. His schemes embrace all time, and all eternity. Of course we can see only a part, and how can we judge of the whole? Some cavil and object, because sin and sorrow have been permitted to enter our world; but who can tell, whether by the wise and overruling providence of God, these may not be made use of as the shading of some great moral picture? One thing we know, a dark ground is best for gilding, and precious stones set in ebony, shine with more brilliancy! There are, moreover, providences in relation to nations, families, and individuals, which, to such short-sighted creatures as we are, appear very mysterious, but in the winding up, we shall, no doubt, all have to say, He has done all things well. You recollect the case of Jacob. In a dark hour he said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away also. All these things are against me, and will bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." But mark the winding up! Joseph is taken away, it is true, but it is only for a season; and, lo! Joseph's wagons are come! Joseph is made governor over all the

land of Egypt; he has provided corn for the patriarch and all his household; and, lo! Joseph's wagons are come to take them all down into Egypt, to nourish them, and keep them well provided for in a time of famine! And see, too, those silvery locks of his, which the patriarch, in a dark hour, said, should go down with sorrow to the grave. Only see how they fall upon the neck of his beloved son, Joseph!

“Shall little haughty ignorance pronounce  
His works unwise? the smallest part of which  
Exceeds the narrow vision of her mind?  
As if upon a full proportioned dome,  
With swelling columns heaved, the pride of art,  
A critic fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads,  
An inch around, with blind presumption bold,  
Should dare to tax the structure of the whole!”

“A thing,” says Eliphaz, “was secretly brought unto me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts, from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes. There was silence, and I heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and he charged his angels with folly.” Child of the dust, enter into thy nothingness! Creature of yesterday, put thine hands to thy mouth, and listen to the loud and harmonious shout of the heavenly world: “Allelulia! for the Lord God

omnipotent reigneth!" Now, my reader, "we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now, we know in part, but then shall we know, even as also we are known." O, when all darkness shall be removed, and the plans of heaven shall be fully developed, we shall then see that everything permitted and done on earth, was permitted and done in wisdom and in love. Here is a piece of embroidery. It is some great masterpiece of art. You look upon the wrong side. You see nothing beautiful or distinct! Turn the right side, and you exclaim, "O, what a beautiful piece of embroidery this is! The colors, how brilliant! The figures, how distinct!" Here is a celebrated painting stretched over the wall. It has many figures, and they are so arranged that, to the eye that takes in the whole design of the artist, it appears most admirable; but there is a curtain hanging over a part of it, and you are perplexed. Remove the curtain; then comes admiration, and you laud the artist, and pronounce the painting the most beautiful and perfect that you have ever seen. So it is with all the plans and providential dispensations of Heaven. When the curtain is removed, then will they appear in beauty and glory far transcending all our conceptions now. "What I do," says the Saviour, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

Christians! here is a matter of joy for you! O how delightful to think, that it is your God and heavenly Father who fills the throne, and sways the sceptre, and rules over all! And joy upon joy! He will never abdi-



cate the government, but will reign forever! In what rapid succession do the kings of the earth succeed each other; but our King is one, and there is no other. The alone monarch of the universe. None before him! none after him! Through all the ages of time, through all the cycles of eternity, One and alone! "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever," says the Psalmist, "even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord." He reigns over the world, and, although wickedness abounds, and sorrows now prevail, yet the world is in good hands, and all its affairs are under the control of a wise and a powerful God. Aye, and the time is coming, when great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!" Moreover, Christian, your God reigns over the Church. Aye, and "Zion enjoys her Monarch's love." God is in the midst of her. God will help her, and that right early. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities. Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down. Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed; neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; but there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby." But God not only reigns over the world and the Church. He reigns over all things. Then, believer, remember, He reigns over you and yours. All your interests are safely lodged in his hands. Has sorrow entered your dwelling? Has deep affliction come upon you? O remember! He who notices

the falling sparrow, will not forget the children of his love! Fear not, in the sight of your heavenly father you are of more value than many sparrows. All your trials are known to him; your sighs are heard; yours tears are in his bottle; and the promise is, All things shall work together for good to them that love God. Yes, thank God!

“There is a day of sunny rest,  
For every dark and stormy night;  
And grief may hide an evening guest,  
But joy shall come at morning light!”

Allelulia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!  
Amen. Allelulia!

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## SERMON XIII.

### THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN. iii. 2.

BELIEVERS may be unknown to fame; by worldlings they may be despised; by witlings and infidels they may be held in contempt. It matters not; it is a blessed thing to be a Christian. It is better to be numbered amongst the disciples of Christ, than to be enrolled amongst the most distinguished heroes the world ever saw. In proof of this assertion, I need only adduce the words of our text: “Be-

loved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

The *present* and *future* condition of believers, will be the theme of our meditations at this time.

I. The present condition of believers.—This is presented in these beautiful words: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." In a certain sense, all mankind are the sons of God, as he is the Author and Source of their being; but, believers are the sons of God, in a sense peculiar to themselves; and even they were not always such; for, according to the Scriptures, they themselves were once the children of wrath, even as others. But they have been made the children in two ways: by *regeneration* and *adoption*.

First: By regeneration. The great doctrine of regeneration is clearly taught, both in the Old and New Testaments, but it was made very prominent by our Saviour, in his conversation with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night, and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher, come from God; for no man can do these miracles, that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus knowing how superficial were his views in the matter of spiritual things, and replying rather to his thoughts than to his words, said unto him, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus expressing his astonishment at this declaration, Jesus answered and said unto him, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye

must be born again: the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Thus the Saviour, whilst he admits that the doctrine may not be easily comprehended by man, does not explain it away, but re-affirms its truth. He teaches that it is of the operations of the Spirit, and may be known by its effects. We cannot see the wind; we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; but we know that there is such a thing as wind; for we can feel it, and we can see the effects thereof. So in the matter of regeneration. But, what is regeneration? In what does it consist, and what are its proofs? It is a work of the Divine Spirit, infusing spiritual life in the soul; and, as it were, new-creating the whole moral man—giving the subject thereof new views, new feelings, new sorrows, and new joys, especially a new taste and relish for spiritual things; so that, of the man truly regenerated it may be affirmed, he is a "new creature in Christ," old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. But those who are Christians, are made the children of God, not only by regeneration, but by adoption. And what is adoption? "Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." By regeneration we are made to possess the nature, by adoption, the inheritance of sons; so that, I repeat it, by regeneration and adoption, we are, in a peculiar and most blessed sense, constituted the sons, or children of God; and here, in speaking of the present condition of believ-



ers, it is proper for us briefly to notice some of their privileges, and the honors now conferred upon them. And,

First: They are owned as the children of God.—What a privilege and honor this is! When it was proposed to David, the vanquisher of Goliath, to become, by marriage, the son-in-law of King Saul, he seems to have been quite overwhelmed with a sense of the honor proposed to be done unto him, and said, “Seemeth it to you a light matter to be a king’s son-in-law, seeing I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?” Now, if David thought it such a great thing to become the son-in-law of an earthly monarch, what shall we say of the privilege and honor conferred upon us, poor sinners and worms of the dust, to be made the sons and daughters of the Monarch of all worlds the great and glorious God! whom all the heavenly armies worship and adore. “Behold,” says John, “what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.”

Secondly: We are not only called the sons of God, or acknowledged as such, but we are treated as such. Yes! As children we are taught of God; as it is written, “All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.” And it is a remarkable fact, that Christians of every communion, of all classes, and of every age, give proof that they all have been brought into the same school; have had the same teacher; and all have learned substantially the same lessons. And here I may mention, in few words, some of the most important lessons which they have all been taught. A first lesson is, the vanity of the world. Under

Divine influences, they have been brought to have such a view and sense of the emptiness of all things here below, that they are led to desire and seek after "a better country, even an heavenly." A second lesson is, their sinfulness, they are brought to know and feel that they are sinners; yea, in the sight of God, great sinners. They are led to see that it is of the Lord's mercies that they have not been consumed; and the prayer of the publican has been made their prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" A third lesson taught to all who are the children of God, is the depravity of their hearts—the corruption of their whole moral nature. The Bible says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and the Saviour says, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," &c. This may seem strange to the unrenewed man; but, when fully brought under Divine influence, he finds that the Bible account of the matter is but too true; that the heart is indeed deceitful and wicked; a bad soil, where lies the germ and buddings of all manner of iniquity; a polluted fountain, whence bitter waters are ever flowing; and the prayer of the Psalmist is found a most appropriate and much needed prayer: "Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew within me a right spirit." A fourth lesson taught by the Lord to all of his children, is their weakness and helplessness. Once they thought themselves strong; could repent just when they pleased, and (to use a common phrase) "get religion" just when they pleased. And I must say, that even persons who are really under Divine influences, when first awakened, are usually of the same

opinion still ; hence, as soon as they are roused to a consideration of their lost condition without Saviour, they immediately go about to work out their own salvation. They go from duty to duty ; from ordinance to ordinance ; from resolution to resolution : thus endeavoring to establish a righteousness of their own. They are going to outstrip old professors ; they are going to do wonderful things ! But, after a while, they find that they do not get along as well as they expected. They make promises, and they break them ; they purpose to do this, and they do it not : they want to repent, and they cannot repent ; they want to believe, and they cannot believe ; they want to love, and they cannot love ; they want to feel, and their hearts are as hard as rock ! They are astonished—think that their case is very peculiar ; are tempted to believe that their day of grace is over. Ah ! now they feel that their case is an evil one ; that they are lost, and cannot help themselves ; yea, that their strength is perfect weakness ; and, with a humbled heart, are ready now to say,

“A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,

On thy kind arm I fall ;

Be thou my Strength, and Righteousness,

My Jesus, and my All.”

A fifth and last lesson which I shall mention is, the suitableness and preciousness of Christ to the poor trembling sinner. It is wonderful what new views of Christ the sinner has, when brought under the teachings of the Divine Spirit. He that formerly was as a “root out of a dry ground,” is now as the “rose of Sharon,” yea, as the “chieftest among ten thousand, and the one altogether

lovely." The sinner sees that the blessed Redeemer is exactly suited to his case; that there is not a want in himself but there is a corresponding fulness in the Lord Jesus Christ; and now he would rather be saved by him, than in any other way, and his language is, "Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'tis all that I can do."

"Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer,  
Welcome to this heart of mine;  
Lord, I make a full surrender;  
Every power and thought be thine.  
Thine entirely,  
Through eternal ages thine."

These are some of the most important lessons taught by the Lord to all of his children. And thus, as parents teach their children, or cause them to be taught those things which are requisite and necessary, so God, our heavenly Father instructs the children of his love. But again: As children, God corrects us. "Whom the Lord loveth," says Paul, "he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." And again: "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" And again: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection the Father of spirits and love? For they, verily for a few days, chastened us, after their own pleasure, but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." What a thought this is! If we are indeed, by regeneration and adoption, the children of God, then all of our afflictions come from the hand



of our heavenly Father ; they are nothing but the sterner voice of God's parental love, designed to do us good, to wean our affections from earth, and ripen us for heaven, our home, our sweet and everlasting home ! Let us never forget this ; and the thought of it will tend greatly to lighten our heaviest burdens, and sweeten the bitterest cup. This caused the Psalmist to say, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and as children, God corrects us. What a blessed thing it is to be a Christian ! But this is not all. As children, God permits us to come to him in ever hour of trouble and need, and make known to him all our sorrows, and our desires. See that little child ! It is sick, or, perhaps, some person has hurt the child, or it has some wants to make known ; how pleasing, what a comfort it is for this little one to have an earthly parent to whom it can go ; one who will lend a listening ear to its complaints ; and who, moreover, is able and willing to supply all its wants ! Even so, God, our Father in heaven, permits us, as children, to come to him. He has erected a throne of grace expressly for our accomodation ; and what a glorious throne of grace it is ! Its foundations are laid in blood, in blood divine ! It is paved with love, and over it is thrown the beauteous rainbow, everything inviting us to come with boldness, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need. What a privilege this is ! Jacob found it such, when, fearing the wrath of Esau, he turned aside and offered up this prayer : " O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, deliver me, I pray thee, from

the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, and the mother, and the children." And, good king Hezekiah, also, found the same a very precious privilege, when the prophet having said unto him, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live," he "turned his face to the wall, and prayed, and wept sore." And, my brother, what would induce you to part with this privilege? When Herod killed John the Baptist, his disciples, we are told, took up his body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. And so, my Christian friends, whenever you have sorrows, you may go and spread them before Him, who cares for you, and who can both pity and relieve. I, therefore, repeat it—What a blessed thing it is to be a Christian! Permit me to say, I thank God that *I* ever was converted. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," and as sons, or children, God permits us to come to him, and pour out before him all our sorrows and our wants. Blessed be God! But even this is not all. To crown the matter, as children, God has provided for us a rich inheritance. Parents, if they can, are careful to make some provision for the future wants of their children. Even so, God has laid up in store for his children something to meet their wants in a future state. He has laid up for them an inheritance; and O, how rich and great is that inheritance! It is "an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and which shall never fade away." It will be enough to supply all their wants, and meet every desire through all the ages of eternity. But this leads me to notice,

II. The future condition of believers.—The apostle not

only says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God;" but he adds, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." There is much embraced in these words, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." It is as if the apostle had said: There is something great awaiting the believer behind the curtain, but how great we cannot tell! Something glorious but how glorious we do not know. This may remind us of what Paul says: "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor have entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him." When the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem, and had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built; and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants; and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; and his cup-bearers; and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, we are told that there was no more spirit in her, and she said to the king: "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts, and of thy wisdom; howbeit, I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and thy prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom!" So it will be with the child of God, when he reaches the heavenly world; when he shall have seen "the King in his beauty," and shall have gazed upon the angels bending around the throne, and the redeemed, in their robes, "washed, and made white in the

blood of the Lamb." When he shall have heard the sweet and rapturous songs of that heavenly world, and shall have tasted of its unutterable joys, methinks he will exclaim in admiration:—I heard of heaven when I was on earth; I heard of its glories and its bliss; but, O, the half was not told me! Heaven! sweet heaven! it exceedeth, it far, very far exceedeth, all that I ever heard, that I ever dreamed of when on earth! Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

1. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," in point of dignity. It is true, we are told that we shall be made "kings and priests unto God;" but we know not what is implied in being made "kings and priests unto God." Moreover, we are told that we shall be made equal unto the angels; but we never saw these angels. It is true, John says he saw an angel come down from heaven, and the earth was lightened with his glory. This, to be sure, is calculated to give us very exalted conceptions of these first-born sons of light; but we have never seen an angel with our own eyes, and, therefore, we know not what it is to be made equal unto the angels. We know not what we shall be in point of dignity, as we have said; but this I will venture to affirm, we have reason to believe that the humblest believer on earth shall, in heaven, attain a point of dignity, and grandeur, and glory, to which the loftiest angels cannot attain. Is this extravagant? Let us hear what the Bible says: "To him that overcometh," says the Saviour, "will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Now, I ask, where, and when,



was it ever proposed to the loftiest angels in heaven, to have the honor of sitting down with the great Redeemer upon his throne? Again, the Saviour, praying for his disciples, uses this language: "That they may all be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they may be one with us." We know not what this *oneness* with the Eternal Son and Everlasting Father means; but, one thing we know, this honor is proposed to be done to men, not to angels. Again; the apostle, speaking of believers, says: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Notice this language, "joint heirs with Jesus Christ!" We know not precisely what this means; but, we know that the honor intended is exceeding great, and no mention is made of angels being permitted to share in this high honor. Again; we find Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, using this language: "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Where is it said, in all the sacred volume, that angels, however exalted, shall judge the world—shall judge angels? No, no! This high honor is not for them; it is reserved for ransomed sinners, for those who, by faith, are united to Christ in their effectual calling. And here is the secret, or rather the explanation of the whole matter: The Eternal Son of the Eternal God, has taken human nature, in connection with the Divine, and thus has raised human nature to this high eminence of grandeur and glory.

Peter I. of Russia set his affections upon a plebeian girl. He married her, and thus raised her to his bosom

and his throne. On some grand gala day, see this mighty monarch on his throne! The nobles are around him, and all the princes of the blood, paying homage to their sovereign. And now, where is that plebian girl? Whilst the nobles, and all the chief officers of the realm, are standing around their monarch, there she is seen, robed and crowned, a bride, seated at her husband's side. Even so, in the resurrection morn, when the mighty host of angels and archangels shall stand around the throne of the great Redeemer, the redeemed shall be raised above them all, and as the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be permitted to sit down at her husband's side even upon his throne! O what high rewards and immortal honors await the redeemed in that world which is to come! And why this? Because the work of redemption is greater than the work of creation. It is the master-piece of the great God, and all its memorials will be to the Lord emphatically for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be, but of this we are confident that the humblest believer on earth, shall, when arrived at heaven, attain a point of dignity exceeding great; even above that of the loftiest angels in glory!

2. It doth not yet appear what we shall be in point of knowledge. The Bible authorizes us to believe, that in heaven there shall be a vast expansion of mind, a vigor of intellect, and a range of thought, of which we can now form no adequate conception. The Bible says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; now, we know in part, but then, we shall know even as also we

are known." This indeed proves that knowledge will be greatly increased in heaven, but, to what extent, at the present time we know not. Even on earth, we find that there can be a great expansion of mind, and an immense increase of knowledge, within the space of only a few years. See Sir Isaac Newton, when a little child in his mother's lap, pointing to the stars, and looking upon them only as little spangles; and see the same person, some forty or fifty years after, then a man, a great philosopher, with spy-glass in hand, measuring the empire of the great God, and telling us that those twinkling lights, in the firmament, once supposed to be no more than little spangles, are so many brilliant suns, mighty globes, each a million times larger than the world which we inhabit, and rolling with a speed far beyond that of the fleetest cannon-ball, or swiftest whirlwind. What an expansion of mind, what an increase of knowledge, within a few years on earth, and this, too, with such poor helps as we have in this world? What then must be the expansion of mind, and enlargement of knowledge in heaven, amid the long roll of mighty ages, and with such instructors as we shall there have! There is a very remarkable passage found in the thirteenth chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. In the very chapter in which he says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known;" in that very chapter we find these words, "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." This seems strange, but the idea is this:

—As the stars fade away at the rising of the sun, their feeble rays being swallowed up and lost in the effulgent splendors of the bright and burning sun, even so, the knowledge which we have on earth shall dwindle into insignificance, into nothing, when compared with the infinitely greater knowledge we shall have in yonder world of dazzling light and glory! O heaven, sweet heaven! There we shall have all light, and no shadows! all day, and no night! Yes; this is the testimony of the angel, given to John in the Isle of Patmos—"And there shall be no night there." What new views we shall have of the grandeur of God, and the glories of his divine perfections! What new discoveries of the immensity of his empire, and the wisdom of his administration! And, with regard to the wonders of Redemption, what new, what delightful, what overwhelming views we shall have of them! Then we shall understand the full meaning of that heavenly song, sung by those who stand upon a sea of glass, mingled with fire: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord, God, Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Ah! my brethren, we know that our knowledge in heaven will be greatly increased; but we can now form no more idea of the exceeding greatness of our knowledge in heaven, than the prattling child can have of the knowledge of the greatest and wisest man who ever lived on earth. One thing, however, we know, that one scene of brightness will yield to another scene of greater brightness; light will be cased in light, and glory casketed in glory! And as the eagle, in her upward flight, soars away, far away from earth, as



if she would revel amongst the stars, and light upon the chariot of the sun, so the ransomed soul, on wings sublime, shall expatiate amid the bright splendors which for ever play around the eternal throne! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be," neither in point of dignity, nor knowledge, and, I may add—nor joy! According to Scripture, the joys of heaven are exceeding great, they are unspeakable. "In thy presence," says the psalmist, "there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Think of God, what a glorious Being he is, and how sweet to share in his smiles, and forever to bathe beneath the unclouded glories of his countenance! Think of our blessed Saviour, and the joy of seeing him as he is in glory, surrounded by saints and angels, who in notes of sweetest harmony are for ever hymning his praise! And, to crown this joy, our text says, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." The vision of the Redeemer will not only be beatific, it will be transforming; and then shall be brought to pass what is written in the oracles of divine truth, "we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord!" O! to bear the image of him whom we love, and all the angels love! to bear the image of him who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person! Who can conceive of the joy, the rapturous joy which this will inspire! If this were all, it might truly be said, we know not what we shall be in the matter of joy. Next comes the society of the blessed! O! to

think of mingling with angels, pure angels, being made as angels ourselves! and then to have, as our companions in bliss, the whole company of the redeemed—the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs! How delightful to see and converse with Abel, the first of the human family who ever entered the portals of heaven! And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who was translated, that he should not see death, having before his translation this testimony, that he pleased God! How delightful also, to see and converse with Noah, who with his family was saved in the ark, when the waters of the deluge passed over the whole earth! And there too, we will meet Abraham, the father of the faithful; and Isaac, the child of promise; and Jacob, the venerable patriarch, who, dying, leaned upon the top of his staff, and spake so sweetly of Shiloh who was to come, saying, “I wait for thy salvation, O Lord!” And there is Moses, the saint of God, by whom the Law was given in Sinai’s awful mount; and Joshua the son of Nun, who had the honor of leading the tribes of Israel into the promised land. But the time would fail me to tell you of Samuel the prophet, and David, the sweet singer of Israel; and Isaiah whose visions of the Messiah were so clear; and of John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord. And there is Peter too, the ardent one; and John who leaned upon his Master’s bosom at the paschal feast; and Paul, who was so miraculously converted on his way to Damascus; and Stephen, whose face did shine as the face of an angel, and who had the honor of leading on the noble army of martyrs under the New Testament dispensation.

And will it not be joyous to meet in glory the unnumbered millions of every age, of whom we have never heard; and our own beloved friends and acquaintances, too, with whom, in the sanctuary, in the social prayer-meeting, and around the domestic altar, we mingled our prayers and songs of praise! And, what say you of the joy of meeting and greeting that sainted mother, who led you in tender life to the throne of the heavenly grace, and who, dying, charged you to meet her in heaven! O the sweet joys of heaven, and the fulness thereof! But why enlarge? I might mention the sweet music, the loud and harmonious songs of the heavenly world, as a source of joy, and the boundless increase of knowledge: in short, I might mention as the sum of all, the absence of all evil and the possession of all good, and the stamp of immortality given to each and every source of joy! But, it is enough to say, with Paul, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor have entered into the hear of man, what things God hath prepared for those that love him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear, what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

"A hope so much divine,  
May trials well endure;  
May purge our souls from sense and sin,  
As Christ the Lord is pure.  
If, in my Father's love,  
I share a filial part,  
Send down thy Spirit, like a dove,  
To rest upon my heart.  
We would no longer lie

Like slaves beneath the throne ;  
Our faith shall, Abba, Father, cry,  
And thou the kindred own,"

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## SERMON XIV.

### THE DANGER OF PROCRASTINATION.

And he said, To-morrow.—EXODUS viii. 10.

COMMISSIONED by the God of heaven, Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh and demanded the release of the children of Israel ; threatening, in case of disobedience, that tremendous plagues should come upon the land. Pharaoh disobeyed ; and, accordingly, these plagues came in rapid and awful succession. It was whilst one of these plagues was upon the land, (the plague of frogs,) that the monarch of Egypt sent for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord for me, that he would take away the frogs. And Moses said, "When shall I entreat for thee?" And he said, "To-morrow." Is not this strange? One would think that Pharaoh would have said—Moses, what a question this is! You see with your own eyes, what an evil case I am in. Do you suppose that I can be willing to remain in this case another day, or even another hour? Do you ask, when you shall pray for me? Why, of course, the sooner the better—this day, this hour, this moment.—But, no: he said, "To-morrow!" Is this strange? It certainly is. But I am strongly



inclined to think, that this incident was recorded to present, in a figure, a case very common, and which is really far more strange; I mean the case of the sinner, who puts off to some future period the great work of securing his soul's salvation. In speaking from the words of our text, I purpose to notice several points of resemblance between Pharaoh and the impenitent sinner. And, I must say, I do think that the points of resemblance are very exact.

I. Both are in an evil case.—Pharaoh was certainly in an evil case, for God was dealing with him, and the judgments of heaven were upon himself, and upon his land. The monarch of Egypt felt that he was in an evil case. He must have felt it, and that very sensibly, or, verily, he had never sent for Moses and Aaron, and entreated them to pray for him. What! a proud man, a haughty king, beg the people of God to pray for him! This is convincing proof that Pharaoh believed himself in an evil case. And, I ask, what is the case, or condition of the sinner? According to the representation of the Scriptures, he is in the open field of ruin. His pious friends have come to Him, who is declared to be a hiding-place before the wind, and a covert from the tempest; but, alas! the impenitent sinner has no such hiding-place—he is still in the open field of ruin, and what, though he may not see the lightnings flash, nor hear the thunders roll, the storm is coming; and when it comes, it will be far worse than that which smote man and beast in the land of Egypt. Exposed every hour to be caught up in the whirlwind of divine wrath, and to the peltings of a

storm which shall have no end, surely the sinner is an evil case. O how evil!

Again: According to the Scriptures, the impenitent sinner is in the broad road which leads to death, whilst his pious friends are in the narrow path which leads to life. Observe, this is the representation of the Saviour himself—his language is very striking—listen to it: Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because, straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” The Saviour here, it will be seen, represents the whole human family as journeying to another and eternal world; but not all journeying in the same way, nor all likely to arrive at the same end. See the great mass in the broad way! The smaller number in the narrow path. And whither are the broad travellers going? To life? To heaven? Alas! no, but to destruction!—that is, to the realms of darkness and despair! O see the broad travellers—they are hurrying on! Every moment drawing nearer and still nearer to the world of woe—the gulf of everlasting ruin! With solemnity, I call God to record upon my soul, that I would not be in that broad road one hour for a thousand worlds! Sinner! remember you are in the broad road! And can you tell me, how far off is your journey’s end? See, your mother, perchance, is in the other way, the narrow way, which leads to life. She beckons you to join her. She weeps: she prays for you! O be persuaded—leave the broad road—enter in at the straight gate. This is the injunc-

tion of the Saviour himself. If you remain where you are, I tell you the truth in Christ, I lie not, like Pharoah, you are in an evil case.

Again : According to the Scriptures, the sinner is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth upon him. Observe, it is not said that he is in danger of being condemned ; but is condemned already. This is the very language of the Saviour, and how awfully does it set forth the condition of the sinner ! Did you ever see a prisoner upon whom the sentence of death had been pronounced ? Did you think him to be in an evil case ? Well, he was. But the sinner is under sentence of death of a more awful kind, even the death of the soul. It is even so. The sentence which dooms him to everlasting death, has already passed upon him ; and if that sentence is not reversed, the pangs of the second death will assuredly seize upon him. But what adds a new ingredient of terror, is this, the wrath of God abideth upon him, hangs over him as the axe of the executioner, or thunderbolt of heaven, which may fall upon him at any moment. Suppose, walking at the foot of a lofty mountain. you should look up and see, hanging just over your head, a projected rock, quivering, and ready to fall upon you : would not this fill you with terror ? but what is that quivering rock to the wrath of God ? O that the sinner could but know his true condition ! How unspeakably evil it is ! methinks the cry of the Philippian jailor would soon be his cry : " O sirs, what must I do to be saved ? " Once more :

The sinner is on the left hand of his Judge ; his pious friends are on the right : hear what the Saviour says, in

relation to this matter. In portraying the scenes of the last great day he utters this language: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, with all his holy angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. He shall place the sheep upon his right hand, and the goats upon the left. Then shall he say to those upon the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And then shall he say to those upon the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." O, fearful condition of those upon the left hand! Sinner, did you know it, you are upon the left hand this moment; and if the angel of death should now touch you, you are linked to the left hand, to await that fearful sentence—Depart! Is not this an evil case to be in? How can you consent to remain in it? How can you consent to die in it? But you are ready to say—O sir, I know that the unconverted sinner is in an evil case, and I know that I am one; but, I do not intend to remain in this condition, certainly I do not intend to die in it. I hope to be converted, I intend to be. This leads me to notice,

II. The second point of resemblance between Pharoah and the impenitent sinner. Both indulge in a spirit of procrastination. Pharoah said, "To-morrow," and so says every sinner. Yes, I think I may say every sinner. Certainly, every one who believes in the great truths of the Christian religion, and especially in the necessity of



conversion. No man intends to be damned, although many in their professions say that they will be damned, and will even swear to it! Can a man in his senses deliberately make up his mind to go to the world of woe. Oh! no. He intends to go to heaven; and if conversion is necessary, he intends to be converted too. It is this hope of conversion at some future day that keeps him quiet. "If I had thought, twenty years ago," said a certain statesman, "that I would be called to die, without being prepared, I would have been a wretched man." This is just exactly the state of the case, with one, and may not I say, with all! The work of repentance is certainly to be done; but it is always at some future period—"To-morrow!" So it was with Felix, who under Paul's preaching, trembled, but said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." Ah! so it is with thousands and tens of thousands, at the present day. This spirit of procrastination is deeply seated in the human bosom; and doubtless, there are many within these walls at this very moment, who are not yet converted, but who intend to be, before they die. They are now saying To-morrow, and they have been saying To-morrow for lo! these many years. See this young man yet in his sins; does he not know that he must repent, or perish? Yes, his mother taught him this a long time ago. Has he repented? He has not shed one penitential tear! Well, has he reconciled himself to the idea of perishing for ever? Certainly not. He intends to repent! When? to-day? No, it is not convenient now. There are some

worldly pleasures which he wishes first to enjoy. But he fully intends to repent. When? And he says "To-morrow!" See that young lady, who is one of the gayest of the gay, who will even trifle in the house of God; has she chosen Mary's part? She has the frankness and the candor to admit that she has not. Does she not know that she must have Mary's part, or she cannot have Mary's heaven? Certainly, she knows it. This is one of the lessons her mother taught her in the nursery. Well, is she willing never to have Mary's heaven? By no means; the bare idea of her never getting to heaven would spoil all her joys, would make her miserable! To be sure, she has not chosen Mary's part yet, but she intends to do it! When?—and she says, "To-morrow!" See that man of business, wholly immersed in the things of this world. He has great forecast with regard to the things of time, but none with regard to the things of eternity. He makes no preparation to meet his God. Is not some preparation necessary? He admits it, and purposes to attend to this matter, all in good time. When? At some future period. And he says, "To-morrow." See, too, those who are openly wicked; who are intemperate, who are profane, who are fraudulent, who are licentious, who indulge themselves in every form of vice and iniquity. Do they not know that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God! Yes, they were taught this doctrine in the Sabbath-school, many years since, and they intend to reform. When?—and they say, "To-morrow." And, O, sad to think upon, there goes a grey-headed sinner; the snows of fifty,

sixty, seventy winters have been bleaching his locks, and his heart has never yet felt the sweet influence of a Saviour's love! Does he not know that he must set out for heaven, or, in the very nature of the case he cannot expect to reach that happy world? Certainly he knows it, for he has heard many a sermon, and has occasionally, and particularly in times of affliction, read his Bible. Has he set out for heaven? He has not taken one single solitary step! But he purposes to set out. When? "O, at some future period." And even this grey-headed sinner says, "To-morrow!" Persons in health too, I have seen putting off seeking the salvation of their souls until they got sick; and when they were laid upon a bed of disease, they were in too much pain to attend to the matter, and they put it off until they got well again; and some persons, even under awakening influences, postpone the act of submission to Christ. They hope to be able to do something meritorious, and be better prepared to close in with the offers of salvation. When? And lo! even the awakened sinner too frequently says, "To-morrow!" O this spirit of procrastination! How common! It has proved the ruin of millions, and yet it is perhaps as common now as it ever was. Alas that it should be so! But there is another point of resemblance:

III. Both Pharaoh and the impenitent sinner have some reasons for saying "to-morrow," but the reasons are not good. The monarch of Egypt said to-morrow, hoping, perhaps, that his magicians might be able to remove the frogs, or that they might pass away themselves before the time fixed; and then, no thanks to Moses, or the

God whom he served. No matter what his reasons were, we are quite sure they were not good. Even so, the sinner who puts off seeking the salvation of his soul, doubtless has some reasons for doing so, but, assuredly his reasons are not good. Some tell us that they have not time to attend to such matters. The Saviour knew very well the varied engagements of human life. And yet his command to every individual is this, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" that is, seek this as an object of the first importance, and in the first place; and that we should permit nothing whatever to have the priority over this, a remarkable case is left upon record. And one said to our Saviour, Master, I will follow thee said another, but "suffer me first to go and bury my father." Is there any duty more sacred than the performing of the funeral obsequies for a dead parent? Surely the Saviour will grant this request. No; he did not! "Let the dead bury their dead," said he, but go thou and preach the gospel; and as piety is a prerequisite to the work of the ministry, we see plainly that the Saviour meant to be taken literally when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Let no one then say, that he has not time to seek the salvation of his soul. In no case can this reason be admitted as a good one. "But, it may be," another procrastinating sinner will say, "professors of religion are no better than others." In reply to this, we may remind you of the language of the apostle—"And what hast thou to do to judge another man's servant?" But the words of the Saviour must silence every sinner forever: "Except ye



repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But the sinner may urge that he can do nothing. Let him lay his hand upon his heart, and say, if he can, that he has done everything that he could, but he must wait God's time? Is this it? Be it so; the present is God's time, as it is written, "Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if ye will hear his voice harden not your heart." "But," again replies the sinner, "there are so many denominations." And is the sinner such a sectarian as to believe that we must belong to some certain church, or we cannot be saved? He believes no such thing; and therefore this excuse will not stand. Still wishing to justify himself, he may say, "I have time enough yet." "Friend," I would say, "how much time have you? Did you never hear of any one suddenly called away? And who knows, but you may furnish the next example?" But you say, your heart is so hard. And is there not a bath of blood divine which can melt the flint away? Thank God! there is a balm in Gilead; there is a Physician there; aye, there is not a want in the sinner but there is a corresponding fullness in the blessed Redeemer for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. But, it may be, the sinner says, he is not fit to come to Christ, yet his conscience tells him that he is a great sinner.

"Let no conscience make you linger,

Nor of fitness fondly dream;

All the fitness he requireth

Is to feel your need of him;

This he gives you,

'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

The excuses which the sinner offers for procrastination are many. Their name is "legion," but not one is good—not one will answer on a dying bed, nor amid the solemnities of the last great day! I repeat it, then; both Pharoah and the impenitent sinner have reasons for saying "to-morrow;" but in neither case, are the reasons good. This point of resemblance, then, is very exact; but there is yet another point of resemblance, and quite as exact as any yet mentioned. It is this:

IV. Notwithstanding all disguises, the true reason for saying to-morrow is perfectly manifest in each case. Pharoah said to-morrow, because he did not wish to let the children of Israel go. He wished to retain his grasp upon them as long as possible, and as his release of the children of Israel must be simultaneous with the removal of the plague, he wished a little more time to think upon the subject. Precisely so it is with the sinner. He loves his sins, and he wishes to hold to them as long as he can; particularly certain sins, which are peculiarly dear to him and to part with which would be almost like parting soul and body asunder. This one is wedded to gold; another loves the world with an inordinate affection: a third is not willing to give up the privilege of resenting injuries; and another has no taste or relish for certain acts of self-denial; whilst a fourth has contracted a certain evil habit, which he finds it almost impossible to break. See the profane man; the intemperate man; the licentious man; the fraudulent man; the revengeful man; and see, too, the crowd of ball-loving, theatre-going, horse-racing, Sabbath-breaking sinners. These all "roll their sins as a

sweet morsel under their tongues." They would rather part with almost anything in the world than with their favorite indulgences. Indeed, I have known some like Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birth-right; and you know how that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears. Yes, sinners are sometimes awakened under the word, or, by some remarkable providence they are alarmed: their consciences smitten, they are ready to take up the pentecostal cry, Men and brethren, what must we do? and, when told that they must break off their sins by repentance, and their iniquities by turning unto the Lord, they struggle, they hold back, they would like to compromise matters: and when told that they must give up every sin, crucify every lust, and must part with every idol, they think that the Bible exacts too much: and when we urge them to come to the point without any further delay, they are ready to say, and frequently do say, I do not like to be pressed in this way; I must have a little more time to think on the subject. Ah! my brethren, it is even so. The sinner loves sin; he wishes to indulge in it so long as he can; and therefore, he says, "to-morrow!" Surely, all the points of resemblance between Pharoah and the sinner are most exact; and, I would ask, is there not much reason to fear, that the end of the one and the end of the other will be substantially the same? Pharoah was hardened; and is not the procrastinating sinner in danger of being hardened? "My spirit," says God, "shall not always strive with man."

And the apostle tells us of some who were given over to a hard heart, and a reprobate mind; aye, and I have myself seen some whose hearts seemed to be a rock, and as adamant!—yea, past feeling and past hope! O, fearful state of the sinner, when the Spirit, grieved, departs to return no more! Can there be any condition on earth worse than this? Let me be poor; let me be a bond-man, let me be a beggar; but, O my gracious God, let me not be a hardened sinner! O, cast me not away from thy presence, neither take thine Holy Spirit from me! But another remark I would make is this: Pharoah was cut off in the midst of his sins, and so it may be with every procrastinating sinner in this assembly. How awful is the thought!

Let me close with a parable. There was in a certain place a faithful pastor, who was much blessed in his labors of love. He had, however, a neighbor, with whom he often conversed, and for whom he often prayed. This neighbor had some fine traits of character. He was a moral man, and seemed to be “not far from the kingdom of God.” At times, he was much wrought upon, under preaching; and more than once he was ready to say to his pastor, “Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.” Indeed, on one occasion, like Felix, he trembled, but like the same Felix, he, by his actions said, “Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.” Yes, with him it was always “To-morrow, to-morrow.” One day the minister heard that his neighbor was sick, very sick. What if he dies in his present state, thought the minister: he is an amiable man, a generous



man ; in many points of character a most excellent man, but, by his own confession, he is no Christian. Has he never felt the power of God's converting grace upon his soul—suppose he should die in his present condition ! I must go and see him. Accordingly, taking his hat and cane, he called to see him. He knocked at the door ; a servant opened it. "How is your master?" "Very sick, sir ; please to walk in." The minister, led by the servant, entered the chamber. The curtains were down, and the room was darkened, and on the bed there lay his neighbor, scorched by a raging fever. Taking him kindly by the hand, "How do find yourself this morning?" said the minister. "Very sick, sir," replied the neighbor. After a while the minister in a subdued tone of voice said : "Do you think, my dear sir, that you have made your peace with God? Should God see proper now to take you, are you ready to go?" "O, Sir," said the sick man, interrupting him, "I am in agony! Please to excuse me. O my head! my head! I cannot talk to you now. Please to call again!" "When shall I call?" "To-morrow," said the sick man. The faithful man of God burst into tears, and retired. The next day he called again. The knocker was muffled ; a bad sign. Knocking gently at the door, the servant opened it. "How is your master?" "No better, sir ; please to walk in." The minister entered the chamber, and there was his neighbor, still upon a bed of sickness. "My dear neighbor," said the minister, "how are you this morning?" There was no response! The man was delirious now, and spoke in broken sentences, incoherently. The minister, leaning

upon the top of his cane, looked at his neighbor, and the silent tear trickled down his cheek. He was about to rise up and go away, but the wife of the sick man exclaimed, "O my dear pastor, won't you pray for my husband?" The prayer was offered, and the minister taking the hand of his neighbor, said, "My dear friend, good-bye." Still there was no response. Alas! the sick man knew not that his wife was weeping at his bed-side, and that his pastor had been praying for him. As the man of God was retiring, the affectionate wife followed him to the door, and in parting said, "My dear pastor, I am in great affliction, will you be so kind as to call again?" "Madam," said he, "when do you think I had better call?" And she said, "To-morrow!" O that to-morrow! that to-morrow! The associations were more than he could bear; and the man of God went weeping all the way returning to his home. The next morning he called again; the knocker was still muffled. He tapped gently at the door. The servant opened. "How is your master?" "He is said to be worse, sir." "I would like to see him." "You can't sir! The doctor has just left, and he has given the strictest orders that nobody should enter the room but those who are waiting upon him. But here is my mistress."—"Madam! how is your husband?" "O! my dear pastor," replied she, bursting into tears. "he is worse—I fear much worse." "I would like to see your husband, madam, a few moments." "I would be glad to have you see him too," replied the afflicted woman, "but our physician says, that the crisis is come, and that the slightest excitement may prove fatal; but the doctor

said, that if his patient revived, he might be able to see you to-morrow." Having received a message, about the going down of the son, that his neighbor was in a critical state, and too weak to be seen, the minister could hardly sleep that night, so anxious was he about the salvation of his neighbor. The next morning, taking his hat and cane, he went early, to make at least some inquiry. Tapping again, gently, at the door, the servant opened. "How is your master?" was the anxious inquiry. "O, sir," replied the servant, "he is dead!" "Dead!" exclaimed the minister—"Dead!" "Yes, sir; he died this morning, at 4 o'clock." "God have mercy"—the minister was about to say, but it flashed upon him, it is too late now! It is enough—I beseech you, do not say to-morrow any more! To-morrow! It may be too late forever! To-morrow's sun may shine upon your grave! And O, remember that departed spirits return to earth no more! Once lost, you are lost forever! "Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer."

Hasten, O sinner, to be wise,  
And stay not for to-morrow's sun;  
The longer Wisdom you despise,  
The harder is she to be won.

O! hasten mercy to implore,  
And stay not for to-morrow's sun;  
For fear thy season should be o'er  
Before this evening's course be run.

Hasten, O sinner, to return,  
And stay not for to-morrow's sun;

For fear thy lamp should fail to burn  
Before the needful work is done.

Hasten, O sinner, to be blest,  
And stay not for to-morrow's sun ;  
For fear the curse should thee arrest,  
Before the morrow is begun.

**THE END.**



## APPENDIX.

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Several years ago I received a letter from a Christian brother in the State of New York, requesting my sentiments on several subjects connected with protracted meetings, revivals, &c., to which I replied in substance as follows :

FRANKFORT, *Kentucky*, 26th May.

DEAR BROTHER—Your communication came to hand in due course of mail. The subject of *revivals* or *religious reformation*, is certainly one of great importance, and should be well understood, more especially as there are some in the bosom of the Church, excellent Christians too, who labor under prejudices which have a withering influence, both upon themselves and those around them. Having heard that I have acted as an Evangelist, and that I have been in many revivals, you wish me to state something of what I have seen and heard, together with the results of my experience and observation. Fifteen years of my life have been devoted to the duties of the pastoral office, and only about three to the work of an Evangelist, so called. It was chiefly whilst officiating in the latter capacity, that I had the pleasure of witnessing the varied and rich displays of the grace of God in the conversion of sinners ; and although I am again a pastor, settled amongst an affectionate people, whom I tenderly love, and to whom, I humbly trust, my labors have not been in vain in the Lord, yet I must confess, that I look back to the period when I acted as an Evangelist, as the happiest in my life, because it was the period of most labor and most usefulness. My plan was, (having obtained the approbation of the proper ecclesiastical bodies,) to have a series of protracted meetings, spreading over a wide extent of country, and so arranging matters that I might have incessant employment. I labored chiefly in South Carolina and Virginia, but attended numerous meetings also in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Ohio. It pleased God, in the course of three years, to make me an eye witness of many interesting scenes ; and I have subsequently inquired with much solicitude about results, and find that

there are lights and shadows—matter for joy and sorrow; but, thank God, upon the whole, that which is cheering, far, very far, exceeds that which is of an opposite character. But you wish me to be more particular on certain points.

1. *Mental excitement*.—You ask whether it has usually been very strong? I answer, strong enough to produce deep anxiety; strong enough to extort the penitential cry; and, in many cases, strong enough to keep the eyes wakeful through the shades of night, and occasion tears, and sometimes sobbing in the prayer-meeting and house of God. Generally speaking, however, silence and solemnity reigned in our public and social meetings; and cases of disorder and extravagance have been very rare. In about eighty revivals of religion, averaging thirty converts each, I do not suppose there were more than eight or ten cases of outcries; and in nearly all of them order and stillness were immediately restored, by simply repeating this beautiful passage of Scripture, “The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him!”

2. *Measures*.—I must confess I have seen some things practiced which I could not approve. With regard to myself, I may have erred, but my rule has been to confine myself to no set of measures whatever; for my opinion has been and still is, that a measure which might be useful in one place, may be positively injurious in another. I have therefore varied them, according to times, and places, and circumstances. My general plan in conducting a protracted meeting has been this: After the first sermon, I come down from the pulpit, and address professors of religion, who are respectfully requested to occupy the seats immediately in front. This *measure*, if you choose to term it such, has usually had a remarkably happy effect. After the second or third sermon I come down from the pulpit again, and address the youth grouped in the same way. Sometimes, however, it has been found best to meet them in the lecture-room. At some suitable time and place, an appointment is made (if in town or city) for men of business. And when the religious excitement is manifestly spreading and deepening, I have found it of very great service to have a meeting exclusively for the unconverted; Christians being gathered together at the same time in another place, praying. This meeting has usually been extremely well attended, and has scarcely ever failed to be crowned with a remarkable blessing. In giving out the notice, however, I have found it very important to do it properly, so as to excite curiosity, but not awaken prejudice. I have been careful to give assurance that there

was no intention to lay snares for them, but simply that they should be addressed in a respectful and affectionate manner. The lawyer wishes to see the jury whom he addresses. This is natural. The eye affects the heart. And why should not the minister have distinctly before him the characters whom he wishes particularly to address?

When certain individuals are known to be under serious impressions, an invitation is sometimes given, on peculiarly solemn occasions, for those who are serious, and who desire an interest in the prayers of God's people, to come forward, or kneel at their seats. This measure I once did not approve; but experience has taught me that it has a tendency to break down the pride of the heart, give decision of character, encourage ministers, and rouse the people of God to more earnest and effectual prayer. I am free, however, to confess, that in places where such an invitation is not expected, in my opinion it is no expedient. The invitation is sometimes given in the great congregation, but more generally in meetings of a more select and private character. Inquiry, or anxious meetings, have been much called for, and of great benefit. The plan suggested by a venerable and much esteemed father in our church, of inviting the serious to remain after sermon, may answer in some cases, but I confess I do not much like it, and for this simple reason:—when the congregation is dismissed, the current sets so strongly towards the door, that it is almost impossible to resist it. It is, I think, much better to have the anxious gathered together in a more private place, and with less observation. Before the protracted meeting is brought to a close, it is almost my invariable practice to have an appointment for children, from four to twelve years of age, parents also being particularly requested to attend. This meeting has proved, on almost every occasion, one of special interest. I have seen the attention of the dear little ones fixed, chained, for nearly an hour, their eyes sparkling with pleasure, and occasionally dimmed with tears; and I have noticed that many parents have been reached through their children, who would, it seems, be reached in no other way. Simplicity will please little children, and will touch parents too. I confidently expect to meet in glory, many parents and children, who will praise God forever for meetings of this kind. In all my plans, my aim has been to keep divine truth in contact with the mind as long as possible without jading; for it is divine truth, sent home by the Spirit of God, that produces the effect desired, that accomplishes the change upon the sinner more glorious than the garnishing of the heavens: and I have observed, that by grouping classes, and diversi-

fyng addresses, the attention is oftentimes renewed, and the interest kept up to an extent that is really wonderful. Besides holding special meetings for the particular classes mentioned, I have been in the habit of having a meeting for mothers, and I can truly say that such meetings have proved interesting and beneficial.

3. With regard to the "divisions which follow in the churches," I am happy to say I have seen or heard very little of this. My plan has been, from the commencement of the meeting, to inculcate the great importance of brotherly love, and to urge upon all the duty of possessing and manifesting a kind regard for each other's sentiments and modes of worship. Harmony, I may say, has characterized all our meetings; and from what I have seen and known, I am persuaded that, in all ordinary circumstances, there need be no difficulty, for there is something beautiful and sweet in the Christian spirit; and this spirit is made peculiarly manifest in seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Only let ministers avoid all uncharitable and censorious remarks; let them be ever kind and conciliatory—let them aim, not at building up a particular church or party, but let them seek simply the glory of God in the conversion of sinners, and if they existed before, all jarrings will soon cease, and all prejudices soon vanish away. The Spirit of God working upon the unrenewed mind converts the lion into a lamb, the vulture into a dove; and shall not the same Spirit soften down those who have already been renewed?

With regard to *Evangelists*, I think in our church there is great occasion for them; but I would remark, it is matter of the last importance that they be prudent, and under the influence of a right spirit. Two things are indispensable:—First, that they go only where they are invited by the proper authorities of the church; and secondly, that in all things they consult the wishes, and submit to the will, of the pastor. I would further observe, that it is of the last importance that the evangelist should duly appreciate the sacredness and responsibility of the pastoral office, always speaking highly of the stated means of grace. And one main object, I think which he should ever have in view, is to strengthen the reciprocal affection of pastor and people; and to this end it is extremely desirable that every evangelist should have himself been a pastor.

4. In relation to the *Press*, I would say, our religious papers render substantial aid to the cause of Zion. They are of immense service, containing oftentimes information of an extremely valuable character, and circulating intelligence which comes to us, "like cold water



to the thirsty soul." But frequently the accounts which are given of protracted meetings and revivals, are too highly colored, and sometimes there is a freedom of remark indulged in, which, to say the least, is not good to the use of edifying. Alas, poor human nature! Everything is stamped with imperfection in this world.

Before I close this letter, permit me to say something on the subject of revivals in general, for there are many groundless prejudices. Some tell us, "they know not what a revival of religion means." When we speak of the revival of commerce or the revival of learning, or the revival of a plant, the meaning is clearly understood. Why not, with equal ease, understand what is meant by the revival of religion? "But so many persons are converted at the same time! Is it not all sympathy?" The work is the work of God, and surely He that originally grouped the stars in the firmament of heaven, can with equal ease, group those who are to shine as stars forever and ever. "But is there not a great deal of extravagance?" No, not if the ministers are prudent, and the meetings are properly conducted, and closed at proper hours. "Are there no individual cases of fanaticism? No excesses whatever?" Perhaps occasionally there may be. What then? The excesses of Carlstadt, and the fanaticism of the Anabaptists of Germany, did much to bring the Reformation into disrepute; but where is the American, where the lover of civil and religious liberty, who will not bless God for the glorious Reformation, notwithstanding the excesses of Carlstadt, and the fanaticism of the Anabaptists of Germany? "But can sinners be converted so suddenly?" In every case, perhaps without exception, they go the round to work out their own righteousness before they submit to Christ; but after all, is not regeneration instantaneous? Is not this doctrine recognized in all our standard works? Is it not the doctrine of the Bible? "But are there no spurious conversions?" There may be; and are we not taught to expect such things in the 13th chapter of Matthew? Spurious conversions! And are all pure gold who come into the church when there is no special excitement? • Spurious conversions! A friend makes me a present of a bundle of bank bills in the hour of my necessity. On examining them, I find one or two counterfeit. Shall I send back the bundle and despise the gift? "But does not the excitement soon cease?" There is no necessity for it. I have heard of a revival which lasted two years, another which lasted six years, and I think the Bible tells me of one which is to last a thousand years! It is our privilege to have not merely a shower, but a whole day's set rain. Suppose, however, the positive

excitement is not lasting, may not much good fruit nevertheless remain? A few days after, the soil is dry again. Did the shower therefore do no good? "But do not some of the converts, so called, fall away?" Be it so. Go into your orchard; your trees are in full bloom. Some of those blossoms are going to fall away without fruit. What then? Would you have no blossoms at all; or would you have only two or three or blossoms this year, and two or three the next? According to a calculation which I have made, only about one in fifteen or twenty of those hopefully converted, fall away. And what then? Here is a revival, and one hundred profess conversion, but only one half are really converted and saved from the damnation of hell, and brought home to God and to glory! Is that nothing? I think I have somewhere read that there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. But you know how frivolous are the objections so frequently urged, so I need say no more.

Your brother in Christ,

DANIEL BAKER.

## INTERESTING RECOLLECTIONS.

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FACTS are beautiful things, and not unfrequently they furnish fine illustrations of sentiments and doctrines, known and believed by all who respect the sacred volume. In the Pastor's Journal, I have noticed a variety of cases related by those who were eye-witnesses of what they communicated ; and I verily believe that the publication of them has proved to be exceedingly useful. Having myself during many revivals of religion, witnessed a number of very interesting things, I thought it proper to make a record of them, some of which are now laid before the public, as a suitable appendage to the foregoing sermons, and illustrative of certain passages of Scripture often quoted.

### ASK AND YE SHALL RECEIVE.

1. In a certain town in Georgia, lived Mrs. M. a pious widow. She had two sons in a distant State, whom she had not seen for many years. They were thoughtless young men, and avowedly infidel in their sentiments. She received a letter from her sons promising an early visit. About this period an arrangement was made with myself, to hold a protracted meeting in the place of Mrs. M.'s residence, so soon as it would suit my convenience. The pious mother, exceedingly anxious for the conversion of her long absent and beloved sons, made it a matter of special prayer, that the Providence of God would so order matters that the visit of her sons, and the contemplated meeting, might take place at the same time. The young men came ; remained several days, and then said they must return. They fixed on Friday night, when they must go without fail, in the stage. Poor mother ! the meeting to which she looked forward with so much anxiety, had not commenced. The minister had not arrived. It seemed as if her prayers had availed nothing. On the morning of the day fixed for their departure she was told that the minister was come, and the first sermon would be preached that very night. How tanta-

lizing! But mark the ingenuity of a pious mother! Having ascertained that the stage would not go that evening until 9 or 10 o'clock, she entreated her sons to go to church, and there remain until the sounding of the stage horn should summon them away. I believe that most mothers would have said, I have not seen my sons for a long time; I may never see them any more. I believe I will not go to church myself, this evening. I will enjoy their company as long as I can. But no! had she not offered special prayer that they might be present and receive a blessing at that meeting? "Come, my sons, go with me to church this evening, and hear what you can." They yielded. They went; and that night God answered the mother's prayers. Both were brought under powerful conviction. Near the closing of the services of the sanctuary, the sounding of the stage horn was heard, sure enough. According to arrangement they hurried away to the office—but, behold! the stage was full! They were obliged to remain until Monday following. On the Sabbath we had a most solemn time. When the anxious were invited to come forward, or kneel at their seat, if they desired the prayers of God's people, (according to the custom of that place,) several immediately knelt at their seats. Two young men came forward and kneeled near the desk—and only two. I saw an elderly lady at some distance, rise, and leaning forward, she fastened her tearful eyes upon them. It was the mother, and these young men were her sons! Many eyes were fixed upon her, but nobody said, Madam, sit down.—No! it was a sacred sight. Heaven bless the mother! Let her stand. Let her look on. O, it was worth an angel's visit from the skies! That day both of these young men obtained a joyful hope. Verily, it would have touched a heart of rock to have seen the sons, both of them throwing their arms around the neck of their beloved mother—now a thousand times dearer than ever—and telling her that the Lord had heard her prayers, and blessed them, as they hoped, with his forgiving love! Verily, the name of Jesus, in that moment uttered by them, came over her with all the sweetness and power of a charm.

I saw the happy mother. She grasped my hand. She wept. The tears which rolled down her cheeks were tears of religious joy. For a few moments she was silent. When she spoke she blessed God, and said, in the very words of Mary, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour, for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden." Verily, there is a God in the heavens who heareth prayer! One of those sons, I am told, is now a preacher. Take another case.



2. Whilst a meeting of much interest was going on in a certain country town in Virginia, Mr. K., a pious young man, selected a young lawyer who was a noted scorner, and made him the subject of special prayer. About two days afterwards the young lawyer came to the house where the pastor was. I myself was in the same house at the time, but being particularly engaged, requested the pastor to speak to him. "O," says he, "he is not serious." Yes, I replied, he must be, or he would not come here. "I know him better than you do," said the pastor, "he is a scorner. There is no hope of him." The young lawyer was permitted to depart, I believe, without a single religious remark having been made to him. My conjectures were true. He was then under awakening influences.

Perhaps two weeks after that, this young lawyer, now rejoicing in Christ, was riding along the road on his way to a protracted meeting about to be held in an adjacent county. Before he reached the place, he fell in with another young man, Mr. P., going to the same meeting. Religious conversation was introduced, and the awakened lawyer spoke freely of the change of views and feelings which he had experienced, and ascribed them, under God, to the prayers of his friend, Mr. K., who had selected him as the subject of special prayer. "Ah!" said Mr. P., "I had friends once who used to pray for me; but I have been so careless, so wicked, they do not think it worth while to pray for me now. They have all given me up. There is not an individual I suppose on earth who remembers me in prayer." "O yes," replied the young lawyer, "there is one, I know." "Who is it?" quickly asked Mr. P. "The very same who prayed for me has made you the subject of special prayer." "Is it possible!" said Mr. P., and throwing himself back, he had well nigh fallen from the horse upon which he was riding. From that moment he waked up to the claims of his undying soul. A few days after, with great joy, he was telling to those around what a dear Saviour he had found. Blessed be God, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Take another case.

3. During a protracted meeting held in 'S—, Alabama, two daughters of Zion met every day to pray together for their beloved husbands, who were highly respectable, but strangers to God's converting grace. One was a moralist, so called; the other an avowed infidel. Before the meeting closed, both of those were, I believe, soundly converted. The latter died some time after in great triumph; the former continues to this day, if I mistake not, a much valued member of the church of Christ with which he first united himself.

4. A meeting which led to some important and happy results, took place some years since in —, Georgia. Religion was at a low ebb in that place. There were sad jarrings amongst those who were taught by their Master to love one another. The first sermon was preached on Saturday evening. On the Sabbath we had a pretty large congregation, and some considerable interest was manifested; but right melancholy was it on Monday, to see how few came to the sanctuary. Scarcely any but females. The men of the place, generally, seemed to take no interest in the meeting whatever; nay, some of them opposed, and even forbid their families attending. The meeting, however, went on, and of a truth the Lord was with us. By Wednesday morning something like ten females were hopefully converted, but not a single male, man or boy. Indeed, up to that hour we saw scarcely a single unconverted man (particularly during the day) in the church. We were not discouraged—we resolved to hold on. That morning, at the prayer-meeting which preceded preaching, those present, (and a precious band it was,) were reminded, of what indeed they knew full well, that the men were still uninterested. The case of Paul was stated, who went to the place where prayer was wont to be made, and spake to certain women who resorted there; and the glorious results were also brought to recollection, and they were urged to offer up special and incessant prayer for the men. After preaching this morning there was much whispering. One said to another, as they were returning to their houses, "Did you see Captain H. at church this morning?" "Yes." "What brought him there?" "I don't know, but I certainly saw him." In the afternoon Captain H. was there again—and at night! The next morning also! "Why what is the matter? Captain H. comes three times a day! Well, this is strange!" But who is Captain H.? Why, a man of the world—a man of considerable influence, and supposed to be a skeptic. Moreover, a very firm and courageous man, who a few weeks before had arrested a man, when the sheriff, with all the force that he could get, could not arrest him. This is the man who, manifestly in answer to the prayers of the people of God, is brought to the sanctuary, and there led to consider his latter end. In the afternoon of Thursday he came again. Upon the close of the sermon, great seriousness being visible, the anxious were invited to kneel at their seats if they desired to be prayed for. Immediately Captain H. dropped upon his knees, and two others were at his side. The thing was soon noised abroad, and the men began to flock in wonderfully. "Captain H. is becoming religious." "You don't say so! Well I will go and see."

Soon divine influences began to rest upon the men in a remarkable manner, and in a short time we had the happiness of seeing, among others, as many as eight or ten men who had professed to have found the Saviour precious to their souls. Captain H. has since become an active Christian, and a superintendent of the Sabbath School in that place.

\*\* It shan't be said that praying breath  
Was ever spent in vain, "

WHEN THE LORD TURNED AGAIN OUR CAPTIVITY, WE WERE LIKE  
THEM THAT DREAMED.

1. During the great revival in B——, Mr. F., a talented lawyer, was numbered among the converts. His case was a very clear and delightful one. He was one of several, who, brought in at that time, have devoted themselves to the gospel ministry. Already has Mr. F. entered the ministry—already has he been instrumental in winning many souls to Christ. Immediately after his conversion, I called upon him. He was upon the mount! With a countenance radiant with delight, he grasped my hand, and exclaimed, "O, sir, I have an ocean of joy!"

2. When Mr. P. (the young man mentioned in the previous article,) obtained a hope of an interest in a Saviour's blood, he seemed to be one of the happiest creatures on earth. Everything was new; everything delightful—the trees waving in the forest, the birds carolling in the groves, the sun shining in the heavens, and the dew-drops sparkling with the beams of the morning,—all seemed to congratulate him upon his surprising and happy change. Standing, as it were, in a new world, he remarked, "I am a happy man! I have more happiness in one half-hour since my conversion, than I thought I should have even in heaven!"

3. At a meeting in Florida, Mr. A., who had been a disciple of Fanny Wright, and a very profane man, was happily brought to feel his need of a Saviour. After very pungent convictions, he obtained a joyful hope. But the transition from the gloom of infidelity to the brightness of gospel day, was so great that he was literally like one that dreamed. He could scarcely believe that such a sinner as he had been, could find mercy. It was almost too good to be true. Surely it must be a dream! But, no—it is a blessed reality! In this frame of mind, I recollect, he entered the inquiry meeting, one day, and every now and then, indulged in some exclamation of joy. As there

were a number of interesting persons present, who were only a little serious, I was fearful they might be prejudiced by such things; and in apologizing for Mr. A., I made a remark of this kind, that it was not at all surprising if a young convert should be almost wild with joy. Was not Archimedes wild with joy when he had found out how to solve a certain problem? And, continued I, when a man of the world has drawn a prize in the lottery—twenty-five thousand dollars, for instance—Here the converted infidel interrupted me, “Don’t say twenty-five thousand dollars,” said he, starting from his seat, “don’t say twenty-five thousand dollars, sir,—say millions, sir, say millions.”

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BEHOLD HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL  
TOGETHER IN UNITY.

1. During a protracted meeting held in G——, a pleasant summer retreat, in one of our southern States, an address was made to those who were professedly the people of God. Amongst other things, they were exhorted to cherish a spirit of brotherly love, and if they had had any quarrel with another to forgive. They were affectionately urged to pass an act of forgiveness, without delay, and to seize the very first opportunity to extend the hand, and to do it cordially. In about twenty minutes after, while the services were yet going on, an elderly lady rose up, passed by me, and gave her hand to another lady. I certainly did not expect the exhortation to operate so soon, or at least in this way, but verily I was not displeased—no one was displeased. On the contrary a wave of delicious feeling passed over the whole assembly. Many eyes were filled with tears, and methinks in that moment the God of love looked propitious down. Mark the sequel! That lady at that time had two sons and a daughter, all yet unconverted. Before the protracted meeting closed, she had the unspeakable satisfaction of seeing all three rejoicing in the hope of glory! What is this but the broad seal of heaven’s approbation? “Beloved,” says John, “let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.”

2. I recollect another case which occurred in Virginia. Whilst addressing professors of religion, I, as my custom was, urged the great duty of forgiveness, and in order to give greater effect to my exhortations, I stated the case already mentioned, as one pleasing to God and worthy of all commendation, and then made a remark of this kind: “If there are any present in similar circumstances, let



them go and do likewise." While I was yet speaking, an elder of the church reached out his hand over the benches to one who sat at some distance, and with much feeling said, "Neighbor, here is my hand." Another elder also arose, a man of silvery locks, and hurrying to another part of the house, gave his hand to an individual, who grasped it, and said aloud, "This is the very thing I have long wished for." Need I say that a revival followed! Of a truth we had blessed times. How beautiful are the words of the apostle, "And be ye kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

3. In —, State of —, lived a minister of the gospel, a man of some considerable wealth and talents, but in a wretchedly backslidden state. He had instituted three law suits; two of them against Mr. P., an amiable man, and a warm-hearted Christian. Eminent lawyers were employed, and the suits were of such a nature as, if brought into court would have thrown the whole community into a ferment. Whilst matters were in this condition, a revival commenced in the neighborhood. Both were much interested. The minister began to feel that he had indulged too much of a contentious spirit. Receiving, moreover, a letter at this time from a connexion of his, recently converted he wept, was completely softened down, and forthwith gave directions to his lawyers to drop the suits. The very next morning, if I mistake not, he went to a prayer-meeting where he met Mr. P., offered him his hand, and told him that he should prosecute his suits no further. Mr. P., much affected, threw himself upon his shoulders, and wept aloud. O, it was a scene of thrilling interest. Methinks hovering angels looked in each other's faces, smiled, and began to chant David's beautiful psalm:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore."

4. I recollect yet another case. During the progress of a delightful meeting in a country church in East Tennessee, having occasion to speak on the subject of forgiving injuries, I stated one or two of the preceding cases, and then, in substance spoke as follows: "I know nothing of the state of things in this church, for I am here only as a stranger, in a strange land. I know not whether there has been any difficulty or variance between any now present. Neither your

beloved pastor nor any other person has said a word to me on the subject, but drawing a bow at a venture, I will repeat a remark which I am in the habit of making in many places:—"Is there a person in the world with whom you would not shake hands? If so, I solemnly charge you now, in the presence of God and his elect angels, and before Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing in his kingdom—I solemnly charge you, pass an act of forgiveness this moment, and seize the earliest opportunity to extend the hand in token of forgiveness. 'Beloved,' continued I, 'let us love another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God; he that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.' " Saying these things, in a few moments I pronounced the benediction, and as the congregation were beginning to disperse, two gentlemen,\* who had, it seems, been literally at swords' points, looked at each other, and rushed into each others embrace, weeping abundantly. O, it was a lovely and touching sight; it was the triumph of grace over corrupt human nature. Surely religion comes to change hearts, to convert the lion into a lamb, the vulture into a dove.

WHERE SIN ABOUNDED, GRACE DID MUCH MORE ABOUND.

1. Some time ago, a meeting of several days' continuance was held in G——, a pleasant summer retreat in South Carolina. Awakening influences went abroad upon the people almost from its very commencement. To increase the solemnity, the Providence of God concurred with the preaching of the word. Death upon the pale horse came and took away a victim. A young lawyer was cut down in the midst of his years! All classes of persons now seemed to be aroused to a concern for their undying souls. There was one young man, however, the only son of his mother, and she a widow, who took his stand openly on the side of opposition. He was an avowed infidel. He threatened to lay the hand of violence upon the ministers, and once made this remark: "When I die I will go to hell, and make a row there, and drive the Almighty from his throne!" How impious! How daring! That evening he went to church, and as usual, endeavored to make sport of what was said from the pulpit. It pleased God, however, to send a word like an arrow to his heart. His sins flashed upon his view. He literally trembled upon his seat, and after the benediction was pronounced, he came up to me, grasped my

\*One some time before had actually attempted to take the life of the other.

hand, and with great anxiety asked what he must do to be saved? It was but another case of the Philippian jailor, and I could do no better than reply in the words of the apostle, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Two days after this, I saw him, all joy and peace in believing. O, it would have done any one good to have seen his dear mother throwing her arms around him, and saying, in the joy of her heart, "This my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found!" Subsequently this young man went to the north, to preach "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

2. A few weeks after the meeting just mentioned, one of a similar kind was held at —, about fifty miles distant. The first sermon was preached on Tuesday night, and by Thursday afternoon the waters were troubled, and a goodly number had stepped into the pool. There was one man, however, who had no idea of such "*carryings on*." He was a very irreligious man, and although he heard perhaps every sermon, he liked none of them, but generally returned from church in a rage. On Thursday evening I was invited to take tea at the house where he lodged. When he heard it he was angry. When he saw me coming, he, as I have been told, swore terribly. On entering the house I was introduced by a friend, who immediately retired. Left alone with this man, I confess I felt very awkwardly fixed, and scarcely knowing what to say, I made a remark of this kind: "Well, sir, I think we have had a very interesting meeting this afternoon." Immediately he burst into tears, crying aloud, "Mercy! mercy! Lord have mercy upon me!" "Shall I pray for you, my dear sir?" said I. "Most willingly, most willingly," replied he. When I finished praying, he seemed so bowed down he could scarcely rise from his knees. That night there was no rest for him. The next day he was found amongst the anxious—a few days after, amongst the people of God! and is now, it seems, a valuable member of the church. God be praised!

3. The case of Dr. B., brought in at the eleventh hour, is yet more remarkable. Licensed by the Presbytery of —, in the year 1793, he preached a few sermons, (he entered the ministry purely, it seems to please his parents,) then abandoned the ministry and become a deist. In the year 1797, he declared himself an atheist. From that period, and for many a long year afterwards, even until his locks became hoary with age, he waged open war with the God of the Bible. I had heard much of Dr. B., as a man of influence, and one who had done immense mischief. I confess my curiosity was ex-

cited to see the man. At a protracted meeting held M——, Dr. B., was present. He was awakened—was brought under deep and pungent conviction. I conversed with him. He was in an awful state of mind; for, though evidently under divine influences, he had a great many objections to the Bible—quarrelled with Moses—did not like his account of the creation of the world. “Dr. B.,” said I, at last, “if you will indulge such a disposition to cavil, there is no need to say anything more to you, sir.” I immediately changed the conversation. The next morning at prayer-meeting, the Dr. requested permission to make a remark. Permission was granted. He arose, with much emotion, and said, “My friends, I have been a most flagitious sinner.” He went on in this strain for about ten minutes, and then sat down in great distress of mind. It was a most affecting sight. That day, I think it was, he was brought to the very borders of despair. “There is no hope,” said he; “Saul of Tarsus cannot be compared with me—I must be damned!” “O no,” said I, “the blessed Jesus is both able and willing to save you.” “No, sir,” replied he, with great emotion, “there is no possibility of my salvation—I must be damned.” About 10 o’clock he was conducted into his chamber. I slept in the same room; but there was no sleep for Dr. B. He felt that he was a lost sinner. Tossing himself about in the bed, he sighed, and groaned, and wept. All was dark and cheerless to his soul until about one o’clock, when he spoke aloud, and calling me by name, said, “Mr. B., are you awake?” When informed—“O, sir,” exclaimed he, “I feel a change! I can accept of the Saviour now! If Jesus Christ does not save me, I am damned forever! I am happy! I am happy! I would not part with my present feelings for ten thousand worlds.” “Well,” said I, “Dr. B., I suppose you can say, ‘O to grace how great a debtor.’” Clapping his hands together, he exclaimed with great emphasis, “The very thing, sir, the very thing!” As he said this, he arose and began to dress himself. No sun had yet lighted up the eastern horizon, but what was better still, the Star of Hope had risen upon his soul!

“Brightest star that ever rose,  
Sweetest star that ever shone.”

The next day, in the presence of the great congregation, he presented himself as a miracle of grace, and told what the Lord had done for his soul. I suspect, that moment angels in heaven struck a note loud and long, rich and sweet. Some ten years after this, I mentioned this case to a certain lady in conversation. “O Sir,” said



she, "Dr. B., is my brother-in-law." "Indeed! said I. Well, is he still alive?" "Yes," said she, "he is still alive." "And, Madam," continued I, "how does he hold on?" "O, very well," said she, "very well; he is a member of the church, and a useful member too." Surely grace is triumphant, and reigns like a conqueror.

#### MATERNAL INFLUENCE.

Some few years since, when in Texas, I unexpectedly lighted upon a military post. The soldiers, so far as their spiritual interests were concerned, had been sadly neglected. No one had preached to them, nor had any one, it seems, given them a single Bible or tract—no man cared for their souls. Having obtained permission of the commander I preached several times to them. On one occasion, in the midst of my discourse, I observed—"Soldiers! most of you, I suppose, are from the United States, and are perhaps entirely regardless of the interests of your souls; but I wonder if some of you have not pious mothers at home, who have loved you, and prayed for you, aye, and have wept on your account." Having made these, or very similar remarks, I cast my eyes rapidly over the faces of those before me, and observed one who was exceedingly wrought upon. Every muscle of his face seemed to be moved, and the tears began to trickle down his cheeks. Then addressing him particularly—"Soldier!" said I, "come here—I want to talk with you." Sure enough, he immediately followed me, and when we had gone a little way off—"Soldier," said I, "tell me—have not you a pious mother?" Bursting into a flood of tears—"Yes, sir," said he, "I have a very pious mother, a member of the Methodist Church in Pennsylvania." Here he wept aloud—so loud that he might have been heard a very considerable distance. After pointing out the way of salvation to him, through a crucified Saviour, as clearly as I could, I left him. Some two or three days after I called again, and found him rejoicing in the hope of glory. He had found his mother's Saviour and his mother's God! Heaven bless mothers, *pious* mothers, all the world over! and let all the angels of God say Amen. Thank God, I too had a pious mother.

A STRANGE THING.—"Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

Some years since, I held a protracted meeting in a certain town in Georgia. Amongst others who professed conversion, were some three or four men, who had been esteemed infidels. Upon the close of the meeting, I went to another town some thirty miles distant, and

preached one sermon, at night. There was present, in a remote part of the house, a man of three-score-and-ten, who was outrageously wicked, and an open and avowed infidel. He had around him several young men, whom he endeavored to amuse, in order to divert their attention from what was said in preaching. Near him, however, was a stranger, a pious man, who was very much annoyed by his light and trifling remarks. When the services of the evening closed, this hoary headed sinner, it seems, held, for the amusement of the young men, a kind of *mock prayer-meeting* ! After which, he had the effrontery to come to the house where the pious stranger and myself lodged. In the family circle, the impious conduct of the gray-headed sinner had been the subject of our conversation ; and the "stranger" was then requested to lead in the family devotions of the evening. He had taken his seat by a stand near the inner door, and was reading a portion of Scripture, when a knock was heard at the outer door. The gentleman of the house rose up, and opened the door ; when who should come in but Mr. H., the old scorner ! He was pointed to a seat near the door, and sat down. I was very desirous that the brother who was about to lead in prayer should know who had come in ; for I suspected that there would be some reference to him in the prayer : but no ; his feelings were too much wrought upon to notice anything of the kind. When the chapter was read, we all kneeled down ; and in a little time our brother was praying with great earnestness, for the young men who had been at preaching that evening. Now, thinks I to myself, he will certainly notice the old man ; what a pity he does not know that he is in the room. Well, sure enough, after pouring out his soul for the young men, the pious stranger added—"And now, O Lord, have mercy upon that *old creature*,"—and went on to state what that "old creature" had done and said in the church that evening. Upon arising from his knees, the brother who had prayed looked around, and saw the old man near at hand. He was astonished to be sure ; but would not deign to make any apology. The old scorner took a hymn-book, and sitting down just opposite the person who had led in prayer, begged him to sing one of his "favorite hymns ;" and then talked about the recent revival, and the conversion of the infidels there. "They were my disciples," said he ; "Mr. Baker has taken them from me, and I think he ought to take the old shepherd now." I thought it time to come to the rescue of my friend ; and, looking the old infidel full in the face, I said, "Sir, do you ever pray ? Suddenly he seemed struck, as by some invisible power ! His eyes became glassy ; his tongue was paralyzed ; and, uttering some incoherent

words, he rose up and hurried out. I never saw him any more. We were all much astonished, and came to the conclusion, that the hand of God was upon him, and that the sentence had gone forth against him, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

ANOTHER STRANGE THING—but widely different.

A long time ago, I had as an inmate of my family, a nephew, about fourteen years of age. He was a member of my church, and was supposed to be truly pious. One night, in his usual health, he retired to rest. A little while after, I heard a groan in his chamber. Seizing a candle, I rushed in, and saw my nephew throwing himself about in the bed very wildly. I spoke to him, but he gave me no answer. He seemed as one much terrified, and trembled exceedingly. "O that day!" said he, "that dreadful day!" "Why, my dear nephew," said I, "did you think that the judgment-day was come, and you not prepared?" "O yes, yes!" said he. "It was only a dream," replied I; "only a dream, but it is well to be prepared for that day." In a few moments he was composed, and seemed inclined to sleep. I retired, but had not left the room more than ten minutes when I heard another groan proceeding from the same quarter. Seizing a candle, a second time I hastened in, and again found my nephew in a state of great excitement. His eyes were open, but he seemed not to recognize me. I spoke to him soothingly, but he replied not. Every muscle was in motion. I thought he was going into convulsions. Much alarmed, I sent for a physician. He came, and administered medicine, which appeared to have a tranquilizing influence. All who were present, (the doctor, myself, and two young ladies, named Martha and Mary, who at that time had made no profession of religion,) sat down, and watched him. His feelings now completely calmed, he closed his eyes; and, leaning his head upon my bosom, he seemed to be sinking into a gentle sleep. For a few minutes all was still, the silence of the grave reigned; when, all at once, my nephew in pleasing accents exclaimed, "Death cannot make our souls afraid!" Having said this, all was again "still as the foot of night," when my nephew raised up his head, opened his eyes, and sweetly smiling, exclaimed in thrilling accents, "O the glories of heaven! the glories of heaven! Delightful! Well—if ever I saw golden hinges before. Brother, I am glad to meet you here! (His brother had died about two months before.) There is Paul, and there is Peter! Well—let us go and see Stephen now! Well—if ever I drank such water before! There is God!" said he:

and putting his hands before his face, he bowed down his head, and seemed to have the feelings of the adoring seraphim, who veiled their faces and their feet, and cried, in notes responsive to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" He then took away his hands from his face; and I must say, I never saw human face shine so! I never saw mortal eyes sparkle so! My nephew thought himself in heaven—within the precincts of eternal day—sounds seraphic falling upon his ear, and all the glories of the heavenly world on every hand! Looking around him, as one in perfect admiration, in perfect ecstasy, he exclaimed, "Here is everlasting rest—everlasting rest!" Having said this, he laid his head gently upon my bosom; and in every feature of his countenance there was an expression of sweet satisfaction, which no words can describe. In a few moments he raised up his head, and gazing round, as if looking upon objects which seemed to charm his inmost soul, he exclaimed, "There is no curse here! Uncle Daniel told me so!" (He had heard me preach from these words, "And there shall be no more curse.") "O the glories of redemption!" then burst from his enraptured lips. This scene lasted about thirty minutes, all present looking on, but saying nothing, when, all at once my nephew's countenance was changed: a cloud came over his face, his eyes lost their lustre, his features were distorted, and, as if seized with some sudden agony, he cried out, "O I can't go back! I can't go back!" and, bursting into tears, he came to himself, and, asked for water. I gave him. "Must I drink this water now?" said he, and then turning to the two young ladies, with a look and tone of voice not to be described he said, "O, Martha, try to get to heaven! O Mary, do try to get to heaven!"—The next morning he was in his usual health, and remembered his dream, or trance, or whatever it might be called, but manifested no disposition to speak about the matter.

I now simply state the case; I know not, to this day, what to think of it. No matter, whatever it may be called, and in whatever way accounted for, one thing I know, I would not have missed being present for a great deal. It gave me a vivid idea of heaven, and of the sweet surprise and rapture of the soul as it first enters that eternal world of glory. I know not, I say, what to make of it, or how to account for it, but it is so. At any rate, it served to bring up fresh to my recollection the words of Paul: "It is not expedient for me doubtless, to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago, (whether



in the body, I cannot tell ; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell ; God knoweth ;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell ; God knoweth ;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Thank God there is a heaven ! a paradise ! a world of eternal glory, and eternal joy—there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. No sin there ! no sorrow there ! but God is there ! and the angels are there ! and the redeemed, all robed in white, are there !—and there is joy, rapturous joy—yea, the full tide of overflowing and never-ending bliss ! Visions of glory ! how ye crowd upon my admiring sight ! City of the living God ! how happy are those who walk thy golden streets !

"Let heavenly love prepare my soul,  
And call her to the skies;  
Where years of long salvation roll,  
And glory never dies !"

#### AN INCIDENT in a destitute place in Georgia.

Riding as a missionary, in a region of country where the sound of the "church going bell" was never heard, and no ordinances of the church, were, perhaps, ever administered, I called at the gate of a log cabin to obtain some refreshment. As I dismounted from my horse, the lady of the house, a mother, ran out to meet me. "O ! sir," said she, "ain't you a preacher ?" On being told I was—"I am so glad to see you," added she. "And why, Madam !" said I. "Why, sir," replied the good woman, "I have a dear child that has not been baptized ; and I wish him to be consecrated to God in the ordinance of baptism." Upon conversing with her, and finding no difficulty in the way, I proceeded forthwith to the administration of the ordinance. Having explained its nature, and reminded the mother of her duty to do everything in her power to bring the child, even in early life, into the arms of that Saviour who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," I was about applying the element of water—"Madam," said I, "what is the name of your child ?" "What is your name ?" asked she. "Daniel Baker is my name," said I. "Well," rejoined she, "that is the name of my child." Heaven bless the good woman ! It seems she had made a kind of a vow, that if the Lord would only send that way some minister of the gospel, to apply the seal of the covenant to her dear little boy, the child should bear the name of that

minister, as a memorial of a mother's gratitude ! Blessed ordinance ! Precious privilege ! If the sheep are in the fold, why should not the little lambs be there also ?

ANOTHER INCIDENT, in one of the waste places in Virginia.

Having sent an appointment to preach one sermon in a certain place, on a week day, I rode up at the hour appointed and was astonished to see so many horses hitched all around. As no house near at hand could accommodate the persons assembled, we went into the grove, and had such accommodations as we could get. I preached a long sermon, and every individual seemed to listen with an eagerness which I had rarely ever witnessed before. On singing the last hymn, I arose, and gave them some parting words. I then pronounced the blessing, but was not permitted to go ; and consented to preach another sermon, after a short recess. Accordingly, I did preach another sermon ; and all who were present can bear witness that it was by no means a short one. After the last hymn was sung, perceiving that there was great solemnity, and that not an individual seemed to be inclined to retire, I resumed speaking, and having occupied some twenty minutes, I pronounced the blessing, and sat down ; and to my surprise, all followed my example, and took their seats ! I waited for them to retire, but not one seemed at all inclined to go ; they wanted me to give them some more last words. I accordingly arose, and addressed them again ; and as my form was now fading upon their sight, and my voice now dying upon their ear, and we might never see each other's faces in the flesh any more, I charged them, in the presence of God, and his elect angels, to make the care of their souls the one thing needful, and to meet me in heaven ! I sat down again, but still not an individual would move ! Hearts were melting, and tears were in many eyes ! They must still have "some more last words." I began again to speak, and had not continued long, when (my face being turned to the west) I saw a dark cloud rising. It began to lighten, it began to thunder, but none save myself seemed to know that the storm was near. At length, rain-drops began to descend. "Friends," said I, "a storm is at hand ; we had better retire." Then, and not until then, did they leave their seats in the grove ; and one man, Captain Wright, coming to me, grasped my hand with much emotion, and, tears running down his cheeks, said, "Stranger, for God's sake come back, or send some one to preach to us the gospel !" Ah ! little do those who have the means of grace in rich abundance, think of the condition of those

who are far away, who have silent Sabbaths, and no heralds of salvation to preach to them the glorious gospel of the blessed God!

A DEATH-BED SCENE.—“The candle of the wicked shall be put out!”

Mr. R., a very profane and wicked man, lived two years in a certain town in which I resided, and during that period had heard me preach only two sermons. At a tavern, on a certain Sabbath, he had a difficulty with a ferocious man, who drew a pistol and shot him down! Mortally wounded, he exclaimed, “Great God, I am a dead man! Send for Mr. Baker!” When I came, he grasped my hand, and exclaimed—“A dying sinner unprepared!” A few hours after, his sun of life went down behind a dark cloud! Sinners may think it a light matter to live without God, but of a truth, they will find it a serious affair to die without hope! They may revel in sin for a few days or years, at most:

But Oh! their end! their dreadful end,  
Thy sanctuary taught me so;  
On slippery rocks I see them stand,  
And fiery billows roll below.

ANOTHER DEATH-BED SCENE.—“Wo to them, when I depart from them, saith the Lord.”

During a protracted meeting, in a very pleasant “Summer Retreat” in one of our Southern States, Mr. R——s, a young man about twenty-five years of age was brought under awakening influences. On the last day of the meeting I conversed with him, and found that there was a great conflict in his bosom. He felt the great importance of attending, immediately, to the high claims of God and eternity, but like Felix, it was with him—“Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee.” The meeting closed, and Mr. R——s returned home unconverted. Two days after he was taken alarmingly ill, and on the eighth or ninth day he breathed his last. On the morning of the day on which he died, having great mental distress, he sent for a neighboring minister before it was yet light. When the man of God reached his bed-side, he found him near his end, and sinking in despair! “I have no hope,” said he, “my day of grace is over, and I know when my day of grace closed—it closed with that meeting. O for forgiveness!” The minister told him there was forgiveness! The minister told him that there was forgiveness in Christ. “No, no!” he passionately

exclaimed, "but I don't feel it here, I don't feel it here!" laying his hand upon his bosom, already getting cold in death. The man of God referred him to many precious promises, but he could lay hold of none. "It is too late now!" In the midst of this affecting scene, the preacher was called into another room; a kind friend, then approached the bed of the dying man, and said, "Mr. R——s, you had better compose yourself, and sleep a little now." "Sleep! Sleep!" said he in agony, "I have no time to sleep now!" Just at this moment he seemed to be death-struck. His youthful wife perceiving that her husband was just going, threw herself in agony upon his bosom, and shrieked aloud. This roused the dying man, for a moment, and looking up wildly, he exclaimed, "Lord Jesus!" and his heart ceased to beat.

"When a man dies, shall he live again?" "The night cometh when no man can work."

THE CONTRAST.—Another death-bed scene.—"The righteous hath hope in his death."

One of the jewels of my church in S——, was a lady who was remarkably timid, and retiring, in health. This universally beloved daughter of Zion was laid upon a bed of pain, of languishing, and of death. I called repeatedly to see her, and it was very pleasant to find that in full view of her end she had "a good hope through grace." One morning, in particular, (if I recollect right, her last on earth,) I approached her bed-side; and, taking her by the hand, said, "Well, my dear sister, how do you find yourself this morning?" Pressing my hand, she replied, "My dear pastor, I am in pain, I am in great pain; but O," continued she, "I am happy! I am happy! I am so happy! Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are!" A little after, she remarked, "There are the angels of God! They are come for me!" That day her soul was with her Redeemer in paradise. O, what a blessed thing it is to be a Christian!

ANOTHER PLEASING DEATH-BED SCENE.

Mrs. C——, a lady of some distinction, was, I believe soundly converted in my church during a blessed revival of religion. For several years she was a happy Christian; but, being obliged to move in a certain fashionable circle, the fervor of her religious feeling, in a measure, passed away, and a cloud came over her soul. With her evidences of divine acceptance darkened, she was taken sick. She was laid upon her dying bed. On one occasion, I said to her, "My



dear sister, are you willing to die?" "No," replied she, "I have not those clear views of my Saviour which I used to have, and which I think I ought to have." This darkness continued for several days; but it pleased God again to visit her in mercy. Again with the blessed Saviour revealed in her heart, the hope of glory; and full of joy and triumph, she looked up, and exclaimed, "The long expected One is come at last! Blessed Jesus! I am willing to go now!" This light, as it is believed, continued, until it was merged in the joys of the paradise of God!

Jesus, the vision of thy face  
Hath overpowering charms;  
Scarce shall I feel Death's cold embrace,  
If Christ be in my arms!

And when ye hear my heart-strings break,  
How sweet my minutes roll;  
A mortal paleness on my cheek,  
And glory in my soul!

THE END.



















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